



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



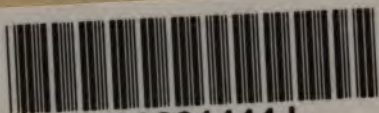


600001444J

35.

43.





600001444J

35.

43.







POSTHUMOUS RECORDS

OF A

LONDON CLERGYMAN.

EDITED BY

THE REV. HOBART CAUNTER, B.D.,

AUTHOR OF THE *ORIENTAL ANNUAL*.

LONDON:

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XXXV.



POSTHUMOUS RECORDS

OF A

LONDON CLERGYMAN.

EDITED BY

THE REV. HOBART CAUNTER, B.D.,

AUTHOR OF THE *ORIENTAL ANNUAL*.

LONDON:

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XXXV.



PREFACE.

IN the following "Records," the Author's object seems to have been to evolve the great Christian moral,—that retribution invariably follows delinquency;—to enforce some of the sublime truths of Christianity, by showing, in the way of practical illustration, the issues of moral good and of moral evil. Punishment in this world, in some shape or other, sooner or later, hidden or overt, positive or indirect, bodily or mental, is the never-failing consequence of guilt, as reward is that of innocence. Trace how we may the course of human events, the tendency of human actions, the same results follow;—they all operate to the same end: the former to promote virtue and discourage vice; the latter to produce happiness and ensure misery,—according as men incline to the one or to the other.

If therefore, some portions of this volume should be considered gloomy, and the aspect of vice too darkly coloured, it must be attributed to the fact

that only such pictures as stir the feelings, and cause the reader to *feel* as well as to *know* the odiousness of vice, will be likely to be attended with any direct moral effect. Fear is, perhaps, the strongest passion in the human breast; and, therefore it is, that we are much more readily withdrawn from iniquity, by the apprehension of the evil consequences that accrue from it, than won to virtue by the blessings to which it is allied.

J. H. C.

36, *Somerset Street, Portman Square,*

November 20, 1835.

CONTENTS.

	Page
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER	1
CHAPTER I. My desire to enter the Church opposed by my father.—Sent to sea.—My father dies.—Take orders.—Difficulties of obtaining a curacy.—Arrive in town.—My first pupil	9
A FEMALE NARCISSUS.	
CHAPTER II. Miseries.—Occasional duty.—Become a private tutor.—My pupils.—Resign them.—Obtain an alternate preachship, an afternoon duty, and an evening lectureship.—Presented to a living.—My patron.—His family.—A singular young lady.—Mr. P.—His declaration	14
CHAPTER III. Mr. P——'s disappointment.—The father reconciled.—Novel sentiments.—Singular mode of communication.—An unexpected discovery.—Consumption.—A lady's vanity.—Her confession of faith.—Fallacies	28
CHAPTER IV. Near prospect of death.—A father's grief.—His daughter's gradual decline.—A reconciliation.—M. P's distress.—A melancholy disclosure.—The invalid rallies.—Receives the Sacrament.—Dies	41
THE CONDEMNED.	
CHAPTER V. Return to London.—A visit to the Old Bailey.—Two prisoners tried for murder.—Condemned.—The violence of one.—Dragged from the court, blaspheming.—Visit him in his cell.—His rage.—Our conversation.—His anger.—He continues intractable.—Repeat my visit, but with no better success	53
CHAPTER VI. Repeat my visit to the prisoner.—He is still obdurate.—Continue my visits daily.—His obduracy at length relaxes.—St. John's Gospel.—He acknowledges himself overcome.—Confesses his errors.—Solicits my future visits.—Promises to give me the history of his life.—Relates it	65
CHAPTER VII. The prisoner's history continued	78
CHAPTER VIII. The prisoner's history continued	88

THE AFFLICTED MAN.

Page

CHAPTER IX. Mr. B.—His sufferings.—Hannah the house-keeper.—Mr. B.'s sentiments.—The apothecary.—His practice.—Therapeutics 99

CHAPTER X. Mr. B. dangerously ill.—Receives the Sacrament.—Love of life.—Indicated as natural to man.—Questioned as to its consistency with Christian hopes.—Mr. B.'s recovery.—Hannah's dismissal.—Mr. B.'s determination to go abroad.—The apothecary surprised.—Mr. B. departs for Switzerland.—His final restoration and marriage 110

THE GAMBLER.

CHAPTER XI. A Gambler wounded in a duel.—His miserable state of mind.—His change for the worse.—Dread of death.—Despair.—Blasphemy.—His distraction.—Last moments.—Death 120

CHAPTER XII. I open the packet.—The gambler's history.—His uncle.—Put to school.—Begins to pilfer.—Leaves school, and becomes a sharper.—Commits forgery.—Obliged to go to sea.—His severe treatment.—Kills his companion.—Quits the ship.—His distress 134

CHAPTER XIII. The gambler's narrative continued.—Engaged at a theatre.—Takes a benefit.—Is patronized.—Quits the stage.—Enters the University.—His conduct, and companions.—A swindler.—Their confederacy, and mutual dislike 145

CHAPTER XIV. The gambler's narrative continued.—A victim.—The rupture.—A discovery.—Its consequences.—The duel.—Expulsion from college.—His return to his patron.—His proposals to Mary.—He marries her.—His unkindness.—Her death 157

CHAPTER XV. The gambler's narrative continued.—A new acquaintance.—His end.—Sir Philip A.—His wife.—His indifference towards her.—His love of play.—Its consequences.—Lady A.—leaves her home.—What follows.—A forgery, and its results.—The gambler's narrative concluded 170

THE WIDOW.

CHAPTER XVI. A new acquaintance.—How formed.—Character.—Dress.—Expression.—The widow's illness.—My first introduction.—Her request.—My feelings.—Visit the

widow.—Administer the Sacrament.—She goes into Devon.	
—Returns.—I make her an offer.—She declines it . . .	188
CHAPTER XVII. The widow's history.—Her family.—Her father's death.—She becomes a nursery governess.—Lady H.—Young Lord —.—His approaches.—Repulsed.—The father's accusation.—Quits the Earl's mansion.—Accused of theft.—Examined.—Committed to Newgate for trial.—found guilty.—Condemned to be transported for fourteen years.—Sails for New Holland . . .	
	200
CHAPTER XVIII. Port Jackson.—The widow's occupation.—Contributes to a newspaper.—Her success.—Mr. —.—Reversal of the sentence.—The union.—She is left a widow.—Returns to England.—Her seclusion.—The separation . . .	
	212

THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.

CHAPTER XIX. Mr. C——.—His character.—Strange malady.—His accomplishments.—A lover of literature.—Quality of his mind.—His scepticism.—Repeat my visit.—Hypochondriasis.—Strange impression.—Unsettled belief . . .	224
CHAPTER XX. Continue to visit Mr. C——.—The cause of his malady.—A vision.—Its effects.—His early attachment.—Ideas of love.—Its character.—Mr. C——'s cousin.—Their mutual attachment.—Disturbed.—The lady's mind changes.—Mr. C——'s distress.—His consequent illness . . .	236
CHAPTER XXI. My next visit.—Mr. C——'s disappointment.—His malady.—His mysterious visitor.—He receives the Sacrament.—Strange dialogue.—An unexpected visitor.—A communication.—The result.—A reconciliation.—Their union . . .	247

THE PARVENU.

CHAPTER XXII. Mr. and Mrs. T——.—The Parvenu.—Connubial discord.—Mrs. T——'s indiscretions.—An adventure.—Its termination.—Mr. T——'s communication.—An unwelcome visit.—Mrs. T's violence.—Her elopement . . .	258
CHAPTER XXIII. The unexpected meeting.—Reverse of condition.—The penalty of vice.—Mrs. T——'s degradation.—Reflections.—The visit.—Its result.—Termination of a disagreeable interview.—An unexpected summons.—An awful scene.—Mrs. T——'s sufferings and death . . .	270

THE FORTUNE-TELLER.

- CHAPTER XXIV. A juvenile party.—The fortune-teller.—Julia
 —.—The prophecy.—Its effects.—My visit to Julia.—
 Her credulity.—Not to be shaken.—The young lover.—A
 sad change 282
- CHAPTER XXV. A visiter.—His distress.—The rejection.—
 Call at Mr. —'s.—Julia's reception.—Her impressions
 indelible.—Her final resolution.—The physician's advice—
 unsuccessful.—Her death 292

THE SISTERS.

- CHAPTER XXVI. Mr. and Mrs. L——.—Their daughters.—
 Parental preference.—The favourite.—Reasons for maternal
 partiality.—Combated.—The younger daughter in disgrace.
 —Her defence.—The spoiled child.—Release from parental
 tyranny 302
- CHAPTER XXVII. Elvira L——.—Prejudices against inocula-
 tion.—The small-pox.—Maternal apprehensions verified.—
 A disclosure.—Parental disappointment.—Elvira's recovery.
 —Domestic misery 312
- CHAPTER XXVIII. Reverse of fortune.—Its consequences.—
 Misfortunes.—The landlord's son.—The marriage.—Elvira's
 misery.—Sisterly tenderness.—Jane L——'s marriage.—
 And happiness 322

THE TWO FRIENDS.

- CHAPTER XXIX. Receive a summons to visit an invalid.—
 The invalid's narrative.—The uncle and father.—Mutual
 engagements.—An altercation.—The old men's violence.—
 The nephew.—A disagreement.—The uncle's obduracy.—
 The interdiction.—The old men's rancour 332
- CHAPTER XXX. The brother's absence.—His return.—Cold-
 ness between the friends.—The challenge.—The meeting.—
 Skill of the combatants.—Fatal termination. Its conse-
 quences.—The father's and uncle's deaths.—Madness.—
 Conclusion of the invalid's narrative.—She receives the
 Sacrament.—Her confidence.—She dies.—Reflections.—
 Conclusion 344

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THE friend of my youth is gone to the inheritance of the good. 'May my last end be like his.' We were playmates in our infancy, schoolfellows in our childhood, associates at college, and friends in our manhood. We took orders together, after which we were divided by life's changes and chances, and did not meet again until years of mutual trial had given a more decided turn and aspect to our worldly destinies; shortly after which I was called to witness his decease. He died of a lingering decline, which, like a worm at the root of a beautiful tree, gradually drained the sap of life, and bowed him down in death. When I recall the happy years that we passed together, in our young and buoyant prime, I cannot but sigh at the remembrance of the brevity and short-sightedness of human joys. I feel the full force of the Patriarch's declaration, that 'Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.'

My friend died in his fortieth year. I was at his bed-side,

When his rapt soul, anticipating bliss,
Burst from the thralldom of encumbering clay;
And, on the wings of ecstasy upborne,
Sprang into liberty, and light, and life.

It was a calm autumnal evening. The nurse was wiping the cold clammy dewes that continually overspread his temples, forced out by the occasional pangs which, at intervals, shook his feeble and macerated frame. When I entered the gloomy chamber, from which the glare of daylight was excluded by a thick gauze curtain, the invalid had fallen into an uneasy slumber; this was continually broken by the oppression at his lungs causing him frequently to gasp for breath, and his thin shrunken lips, pale as a faded lily, to quiver with the painful exertion. I had not been long beside his bed before he opened his eyes, and fixed them languidly upon me. They brightened to an intense brilliancy, the moment he had a full perception of my presence; and, drawing from under the bedclothes his fleshless hand, attenuated and delicate to the last degree, he opened it to receive mine, while every finger trembled with tender excitement. The small feeble pulse was like the movement of a gossamer thread.

I placed my hand within his;—the cold, nervous, clammy grasp, sent a chill to my heart, and I could scarcely repress the vehemence of my feelings. There was no mistaking the sign. His slender fingers, pressing against mine with a scarcely perceptible, yet throbbing motion, satisfied me that it was the contact of death. What sad eloquence was there in that touch! I was stunned for the moment, though almost daily expecting to behold the awful issue; for, however prepared we may be to see our friends quit the world, the final period never arrives without a shock. Philosophy comes to our relief in vain; the stoic is merged in the man, and we witness the last struggle with nature's bitterest pang. I envy not him who can behold death without that tension of heart, which first strains every chord, and then relaxes it into the sweet relief of tears. I never yet saw a fellow-creature die, without feeling my soul wrung by irresistible emotions. It speaks home to the bosom with a solemn earnestness of appeal, not to be misunderstood. It is, indeed, a fearful thing to witness the triumph of death, whether he come clad in the vesture of a cherub, or in 'garments rolled in blood.'

My dying friend rallied a little after I had been by him a few minutes, when I asked him how he felt.

‘Happy,’ he said; ‘it is a blessed thing to die happy. The future has no horrors for me, and death, therefore, is a boon. God is merciful, and I trust my heart is not unmindful of the mercy that deserts me not at this trying hour.’

He paused. The effort of speaking had almost overpowered him, and, for some time after, he did not venture to utter a word. His breathings were quick and difficult. He frequently gasped for breath with painful eagerness; and his eyes often turned upward, the whole pupil being hidden under the lid, as a sudden pang convulsed his fragile frame; but when it subsided, a faint smile of resignation stole over his features, and he gently pressed my hand, as if to assure me that the spiritual man triumphed over the carnal. I could not speak. The tears rolled copiously down my cheeks. He saw that I was deeply affected, and said, ‘What is bodily suffering when the soul is at peace? It will be but a brief trial now; heaven’s gate opens wide before me, and I am about to enter in “where the prisoners rest together and hear not the voice of the oppressor.”’

‘Oh, my friend!’ said I, unable to subdue my agitation, ‘it is, indeed, a consolation to those you leave behind, to know that you quit the world under so happy an assurance. There is no poison in the sting of death, but to the despairing; hope converts that great and last creditor of man into a minister of everlasting joy.’

He nodded assent. His breathing became every instant more difficult, and it was a severe effort to articulate. I saw that he was painfully affected at witnessing my emotion. He pressed my hand at intervals, but every time more feebly. I put my finger to his wrist; the pulse was scarcely perceptible: I saw that he was dying. He turned his eyes languidly upon me, and, for a moment, there was the same brilliancy of expression which I before observed; but they shortly became dim,—the lids closed over them, and I thought that he was dead. The pulse still quivered,—his chest heaved gently but quickly—he again opened his eyes, and said, in a faint whisper:

‘The struggle will soon be passed,—the end of time with me is the beginning of eternity, where “there is joy for evermore.”’ His head drooped,—his lips parted,—he murmured ‘God bless you,’—the

countenance assumed that absence of expression not to be mistaken,—every lineament gradually relaxed into a state of fixed quiescency, denoting the most placid repose, and, after one full but gentle expiration, he ceased to breathe. I looked upon the pallid corpse, now motionless, but beautiful in death, and felt a lesson conveyed to my own heart, which can never be forgotten.

He had no near relations except a nephew, who followed him to the grave as chief mourner. I was with him, and may safely say, that the chief mourner felt the least sorrow. As soon as the body had been committed to the dust, the will was read. The bulk of the property was bequeathed to his nephew; several friends were mentioned, to whom small legacies had been left; and the whole of his papers were willed to my trust, with an especial request, that I would take charge of them, and do with them whatever my own judgment should suggest.

Having secured the papers, I took them home, and, after due consideration, determined to publish them, in justice to the memory of my departed friend. They contained a regular narrative of events, preceded by a brief memoir of his early life. I suspect, from the careful manner in which the

manuscript had been arranged, that he had himself intended to publish it; and, as death had frustrated this purpose, to accomplish it appeared to me a sacred duty. In accordance, therefore, as I conceive, with the implied wish of their author, I give the following sheets to the world, as the bequest of one who loved it sincerely; not for its own sake, but for His who made, and likewise so loved it, that he laid down his life to ransom it from the penalty of a broken law.

POSTHUMOUS RECORDS

OF A

LONDON CLERGYMAN.

CHAPTER I.

MY DESIRE TO ENTER THE CHURCH OPPOSED BY MY FATHER.—SENT TO SEA.—MY FATHER DIES.—TAKE ORDERS.—DIFFICULTIES OF OBTAINING A CURACY.—ARRIVE IN TOWN.—MY FIRST PUPIL.

FROM the earliest period of my youth, at least so far back as I can recollect, it was the earnest wish of my heart to enter the church. This wish was opposed by my father, who had some influence with one of the ministers of state, and I was sent to sea. Before I had served the first six years of an arduous, and, to me, repulsive service, my father died, the minister upon whom he had relied for advancing me in my profession was out of office, the influence, therefore, upon which my prospects in the navy were erected, lapsed, and I was left without fortune, save what was embraced within the narrow limits of a thousand pounds in the five per cents.; without interest, and without friends. My mother had died in giving me birth, and I felt myself as it were alone in the

world. I was, however, now free to make my own choice of a profession, and, being allowed to quit the navy, in my nineteenth year, I was matriculated at the university of Cambridge.

By the time I took orders, the best portion of my thousand pounds was expended, and I became an almost pennyless curate, having the charge of a large parish without a stipend. I had undertaken the duty for two years, as a return for the title; and when I was ordained priest, my entire property did not exceed a hundred pounds. When the period had elapsed for which I was pledged to perform the duties without a stipend, I proposed to continue them for sixty pounds per annum; but the rector declined my proposal, and a young man of fortune, desirous of taking orders, having offered to undertake the curacy, without remuneration, for another two years, I was dismissed with scarcely a penny in the world. My situation was painful in the extreme. My daily bread had now become a sad contingency. I had no immediate prospect of bettering my condition, which was hourly becoming one of real and prospective misery.

I advertised for a curacy, and had an interview with an incumbent who was in want of such professional assistance as I was able to render him. Having questioned me as to my faith upon certain points of doctrine, he said, with a stern formal

gravity, 'Sir, do you make use of extemporaneous prayer?' 'No, sir,' I replied; 'I am not aware that I could employ it, however I might wish to do so. I do not think I could clothe my ideas in words sufficiently solemn at the moment of supplication; I, therefore, dare not trust, upon such occasions, to those uncertain effusions which an impulsive devotion might suggest. I prefer the published forms of prayer, because, to my mind, they are far more to the purpose, and far more inspiring.'

'Then, sir, you won't do for me; I wish you a good morning.'

My next interview was with a very gentlemanly man, who had advertised for a curate. After some conversation, he appointed that I should try his pulpit on the fifteenth Sunday after our interview. Finding he had twenty-five candidates, who were all to preach probationary sermons; and that it would be just six months before the trial of skill could be decided, I at once declined this gentleman's proposal.

Upon different occasions, I offered my services to clergymen, who, I ascertained, wanted curates, but could not succeed in getting engaged. One thought my voice too weak; another that I wanted variety of intonation, a third considered me too tame, a fourth too mannered. They each and all kindly gave me their advice for my future improvement, but politely declined to engage me.

I now, for the first time, began to think that I had mistaken my profession. Still, as all my disappointments had occurred in the country, I was determined to seek the metropolis, and see if better fortune would await me there. Agreeably to this determination, I set out for London on foot, for my finances were low, and after a laborious journey of three days, passed through the turnpike at Hyde Park Corner, with only five-and-thirty shillings in my pocket, and with no positive prospect of increasing my narrow store.

I took a single room, for which I was to pay nine shillings a week, in the house of a carpenter, in a small street near Manchester Square, and the next day put an advertisement into one of the daily papers, signifying that I should be happy to give lessons in the classics and mathematics, to persons at their own houses, for a moderate remuneration. The advertisement was answered only by an old lady, dressed in a faded gray silk gown, and a tawny wig, who told me that she wished her grandson to get a little *larning*; but when I mentioned my terms, of three and sixpence for an hour's attendance, she stared at me with an expression of stupid surprise, and asked if I did not mean three and sixpence a week. Upon finding that my terms were so 'monstrous dear,' she made me a low suburban curtsy, and left me to chew the cud of disappointment.

My first pupil was the son of the carpenter in whose house I lodged. I consented to give the boy an hour of my time every evening as an equivalent for the rent of my room. This amounted exactly to one and sixpence per lesson. It was, however, something, and led to something better, for two of my landlord's friends, a butcher and a tallow-chandler, who had sons, the former two and the latter one, sent them to me at my lodgings, at the hour when I attended my first pupil, and upon the same terms, which gave me a clear seven and twenty shillings per week, after the payment of my room. Upon this scanty pittance I lived for nine months, when the butcher took one of his sons into the shop, and my means were thus reduced to eighteen shillings; for three months longer, I contrived to drag through a period of extreme privation, after which I was deprived of my first pupil, whom the father, thinking him sufficiently learned, apprenticed to a small printer in the neighbourhood.

CHAPTER II.

MISERIES. — OCCASIONAL DUTY. — BECOME A PRIVATE TUTOR. — MY PUPILS. — RESIGN THEM. — OBTAIN AN ALTERNATE PREACHERSHIP, AN AFTERNOON DUTY, AND AN EVENING LECTURESHIP. — MY GOOD FORTUNE PROGRESSES. — PRESENTED TO A LIVING. — MY PATRON. — HIS FAMILY. — A SINGULAR YOUNG LADY. — MR. P. — HIS DECLARATION, AND THE RESULT.

I WAS now reduced to one pupil, who merely brought me in sufficient to cover the expense of my lodging, and I really began to despair of obtaining a provision suitable to my condition as a gentleman and a clergyman. My spirits drooped. I felt that I was giving way to the morbid petulance of disappointment. I was continually talking of the vanity of this world, and of the relief which death brought to the miserable; but, upon examining my own heart, I found that this querulous dissatisfaction with the world, and this stern disregard of death, were but the bitter feelings of a disappointed heart, — the outpourings of cankered emotions, and sprang not from the root of a single Christian grace. A blight fell upon my spirit, but it happily dried up the sap of that luxuriant moral vegetation which effloresced too readily, yet, like the fig-tree cursed by the Redeemer, brought forth no fruit. My mind did not sink under, but was subdued by, my

misfortunes; and when the first keen pang had abated, my thoughts gradually recoiled from a mere worldly view of those melancholy circumstances which appeared to hedge me round, and settled into a more philosophic, or rather into a more religious, tone of reflection. The voice of sorrow became, at length, soothing to my bosom, as it sadly taught me a lesson of the truest wisdom. It first whispered to me the real consolations of religion, and in the book of God's law I found a solace and a repose amid the greatest bodily privation. I soon ceased to repine. I felt that I was sustained; and it is astonishing how quickly, and how completely, the calm of settled resignation stole over, and seemed to absorb, my whole being. The wide world was around me, but though I saw no earthly friend, I perceived there was a home for the wretched, and to the Christian, 'quietness and assurance for ever.' I shall not be abandoned, I said, with the ecstasy of a buoyant confidence, 'Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest, where she may lay her young; even thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God.'

I occasionally obtained a couple of guineas for taking the duty of clergymen on Sundays, when they chanced to be called from home; and this casual pittance kept me from absolute starvation. My disappointments had been so general that I

lost much of my former energy, and I really believe that my want of employment was greatly caused by my want of activity in the pursuit of it.

It happened that, upon a Good Friday, I entered one of the fashionable chapels at the west end of the town. The duty was performed by a young clergyman with whom I had formed a slight acquaintance at the university. After the sermon, I went to the vestry, and offered to assist him in administering the sacrament. Having no other aid he readily accepted my services. This proved, in the issue, to be the foundation of my future success. I occasionally took the duty of this chapel for a single Sunday; and, during the succeeding autumn, the clergyman went into the country for six weeks, and I became his *locum tenens* for that period.

It was my good fortune to give great satisfaction; several of the congregation, who were persons of wealth and influence, inquired my name, and I was honoured with numerous invitations. This led to an almost immediate brightening of my prospects. I was soon engaged as private tutor in a family, at a salary of two hundred and fifty pounds a year.

To a needy man, this was a splendid income. The family with whom I became domesticated, were wealthy citizens, but I soon found that they were more wealthy than liberal, and about as liberal as wise. I had the charge of four lubberly boys,

all exceedingly dull, and three girls, whom the mother was very anxious should be taught Latin and the mathematics; for, as she said, it was her wish, that Sophy and Polyhymnia should read *As in præsentia* in the original, and that Lucy should learn to make triangles, for which she had a natural fancy, and calculate the number of the stars.

I had, indeed, no sinecure in this family; the young gentlemen and their three sisters absorbing all my time, and alas! to little purpose; for they made about as much progress in acquiring knowledge as I had hitherto done in obtaining a fortune. There was a mental infirmity running through the whole blood of the citizen's house, which produced an irremediable dulness of perception. The father became dissatisfied, and so did I. At the end of the year, finding I could neither do justice to myself, nor give satisfaction to my employer, I quitted him with two hundred pounds in my pocket, and another employment to seek.

I was, however, in a much better position than I had formerly been. I was known to many clergymen, and not entirely unknown as a preacher. I confess, the good opinion which had been expressed of my preaching, roused my ambition to obtain a regular duty in London. I was now enabled to seek the acquaintance of my professional brethren, and soon found the impression removed, which

had been somewhat stubbornly fixed on my mind from my interviews with those clergymen of whom I have before spoken. As a body they are entitled to the highest respect. I do not believe there exists any separate community of men, the members of which are generally so unexceptionable in their conduct, as the clergy of the Church of England. It is the fashion, and long has been, to traduce them, but they will be mostly found ministers of good; and I know of no class of persons, whose characters in the main will bear so strict a scrutiny. Of the whole number with whom I have been intimate, and that number is considerable, I have not known a really unworthy man.

I had not long quitted the house and employment of the opulent citizen who engaged me in my distress, before an application was made to me to become an alternate preacher, at what was called a fashionable chapel. For preaching a single sermon every other Sunday, I was to receive one hundred pounds a year. The offer, of course, was readily accepted by me, and from this time, the whole aspect of my mortal destiny was one of brightness and success. I became extremely popular, completely falsifying the judgments of those who had pronounced me incompetent, and accordingly declined my professional services. I soon obtained a second alternate preachership, which was followed

by an engagement for an afternoon duty; and within a twelvemonth my whole time was filled up by my being appointed to an evening lectureship in the city.

My income now amounted to four hundred and fifty pounds per annum, which I was easily enabled to increase to seven hundred, by taking private pupils. These I had no longer any difficulty in obtaining; and I thus found myself rapidly becoming rich. I laboured ardently in my vocation, felt myself a favoured man, and I trust was not backward in returning my fervent gratitude to God, for such manifold and great mercies. My society was now sought by the great and the gay; before whom I appeared weekly as their minister, and from whose lips they were accustomed to hear the exhortations of one, who was, at least, earnest in his anxiety to 'turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,' whatever might be the success of his ministry.

For three years I led a life little varied by those tintings of events, which give such occasional variety to the lives of some among us. I was really becoming independent. My income exceeded my expenditure by full four hundred pounds yearly, so that I was now master of just three times that sum.

About this time, I was presented to a living worth six hundred a year. My patron was a

wealthy commoner, of an ancient family, in the north of England. The living lay within a mile and half of his mansion, where I soon became an almost daily guest. He had one son and one daughter. The former, at this time about sixteen years old, I undertook, at the father's especial request, to prepare for the university. He was a fine handsome youth, of a quick, rather than a strong, understanding, but whose perceptions were so clear and acute, that the severest study to him was no toil. His sister was a creature in all respects extraordinary. She had just entered her eighteenth year; her person seemed truly angelic, and there was a something altogether unearthly in the whole character and expression of her beauty. Her form was so slight as to appear almost etherealized, and yet so admirable in its proportions, that there was no mistaking the symmetry. But a singular thing in this girl was, the sensitive and intense consciousness which she felt of her own attractions; and so indelibly was this fixed upon her mind, that it became its sole and absorbing idea. She imagined herself a sort of incarnation of beauty;—an unaccountable delusion that amounted to a perfect mental disease; and she would stand before a mirror, frequently for hours together, breaking forth into vehement bursts of admiration.

To describe her perfection of form and feature is

utterly impossible. It was so transcendent that she really appeared justified in the notion which she entertained; for it seemed altogether superhuman. Hers was not that mere physical beauty of which health, complexion, and figure, are the chief elements, but an abstract loveliness, apart from shape and features, which was, indeed, an emanation from them, but still, in itself, positive and distinct, though more immediately perceptible to the mind than to the eye. It produced a sort of atmosphere around her, and enveloped her as a halo. Her face was as colourless as the finest Parian marble, but, like the surface of that beautiful material, spotless and without blemish. Its texture was of the most exquisite delicacy; and the small azure veins, which streaked her fair Grecian forehead, gave a sentiment and expression to the countenance, altogether identical with, and peculiar to itself. Her eyes were of a bright deep blue, fringed with long black lashes, which imparted to them an eloquence—the magic eloquence of beauty, even when they were closed. The lids were so transparent as then only to veil, not eclipse, the lustrous orbs that beamed beneath them.

When I have occasionally seen those fine sable fringes droop languidly upon the alabaster cheek, and quiver upon the fairy surface as if instinct with life, I have been quite amazed at the surpassing loveliness of the object before me. Nature had,

indeed, produced a marvellous work, yet the jewel, enshrined within this precious casket, was by no means a gem of the first order. Unrivalled in body as was this fair girl, her mind was, upon the whole, feeble, though certainly not commonplace. There were occasional coruscations, but they were quick, bright, and evanescent. She was the centre of her own universe, the sun of her own sphere, the idol of her own idolatry. The great abstract notion which appeared to engross her whole soul, was the pre-eminence of her beauty. It was almost the sole subject of her thoughts by day, and of her dreams by night. She was not without kindly affections, but the one focal idea, to which every aspiration, every motion of her mind, gravitated, and in which it ultimately became absorbed, overbore and crushed them. The better feelings of her nature were paralyzed by her morbid vanity. The elements of good were copiously mixed up with her moral temperament, but they had become stagnant by suppression; so that, to strangers, she frequently appeared that which she was not.

I had not been long acquainted with this singular yet interesting girl, before it became too obvious to my mind that she was slowly but gradually dying. The characters of death were written in every lineament, though those characters were of such celestial tracing, that I could not wonder her dan-

ger should escape general observation. I saw her form become more and more attenuated, but by such imperceptible degrees, that her parents did not appear to observe it; and as the family medical man, a country practitioner of some repute, but, to my thinking, of very limited capacity, assured them there was not any radical ailment, they entertained no apprehensions for her safety. She seemed herself perfectly unapprehensive of danger, and always spoke of life, as if hers had been ensured to her by the Almighty Being who gave it, for at least a long, if not for an absolutely indefinite term.

It happened that there lived in the neighbourhood a Mr. P——, who had large estates in Westmorland, and whose pedigree could be traced, like my lord Courtenay's, to the emperors of Constantinople. This worthy gentleman was an intimate friend of her father. They were about the same age, had been school-fellows, and, by way of showing his friendship, Mr. P—— took it into his head to fall in love with the daughter of the companion of his boyhood. He was a neat, dapper little man, upwards of fifty, with a head like a thorn-bush in May; as white and as fragrant—with scented pomatum. He always wore top-boots and buckskin breeches, except when dressed for an evening party; then his spare legs were lost in a wilderness of pantaloons, wide enough to have shrouded, in either leg, himself and maiden

sister, a tall culminated beauty, whose extreme exility could scarcely have been exceeded by a bulrush.

Mr. P—— was remarkably fluent, and therefore passed for a sensible man; but his tact consisted in seizing the best things he heard from those whom he knew to be capable of saying good things, and of recasting them in the mould of his own mind; thus giving his borrowed thoughts an impress of originality, that passed, among the many, for a genuine mintage. Such counterfeits are never detected but by the few, and, therefore, a man may wear a borrowed garb of this kind, with considerable credit to himself, if he only knows how to put it on to the best advantage.

Mr. P——, however, with all his failings, was an honourable, and, in the main, a good man. His worst fault probably was, that he never forgave any one who crossed the path of his wishes; and thus it was that I very shortly, but very innocently, became utterly odious in his sight.

He had declared his attachment for the daughter of his friend to the latter, who cordially approved of the connexion; but when it was mentioned to the object of Mr. P——'s predilection, she, unhesitatingly, declined receiving him as her suitor. This was at first thought, by the two friends, to be nothing more than the coyness of maiden timidity;

still, when, as time wore on, her personal dislike became more and more determinate, the father requested me to try my professional influence, and endeavour to reconcile his daughter to the consummation of an object so much desired by her whole family. When I broached the subject to her, the answer which she made was strikingly characteristic of the singular tone of her mind.

‘My dear sir,’ said she, exciting her languid features into an animated smile, ‘did you ever read the story of *Beauty and the Beast*? Would you wish me to realize that silly fiction? I ask you seriously, do you think the Almighty ever intended that so much beauty as mine should be allied to so much deformity as Mr. P——’s? Indeed it would be an utter desecration of the temple in which my soul is enshrined, to attach a mud hovel to it by way of portico.’

‘But, my dear madam,’ I said ‘with submission, I think you look too much at externals, and seem to forget that the beauty which does not appear on the surface, may exist intact and pure within. You must surely allow that there may be a beautiful mind as well as a beautiful body; and, indeed, I think it is no questionable speculation of philosophy, that what is beautiful in the essence deserves far more to be prized than what is merely beautiful in the gross.’

‘This is all very fine, I dare say; but to me it conveys no positive perception. Your essence is too subtile for the eye to deal with, and I don’t pretend to judge of what I can’t see; but, as for the gross, as you call it, that which makes my soul dance with rapture to look at, and my brain to whirl with a thrill of delight, is to my mind worth all the essence in the universe, which does not show so much visible beauty as there is colour on a gnat’s wing.’

Finding that I was only casting fuel upon the kindling fires of a most pertinacious prejudice, by the line of argument I had adopted, I changed my mode of assault, by trying how far an appeal to her filial obligations would stagger her resolution.

‘Well,’ said I, ‘supposing you to be right, is there not a delight in obeying your father upon earth, a duty second only to obeying your Father which is in heaven?’

‘Certainly, when our obedience to the one is not an act of disobedience to the other. But I must tell you that when an earthly father enjoins a daughter to do that which is repugnant to her own soul, and which, in consequence of this very repugnance, might lead her into guilt, he commits an offence against God; she would, consequently, likewise offend against God by obeying, and thereby, in her own person, ratifying such an injunction.’

I felt the force of this argument so strongly, that, for the moment, I was unable to reply. It so nearly accorded with my own views, that I could not conscientiously urge her further, when I saw her antipathy to be so fixed; I therefore said, 'Well, if it is really a matter of conscience, I should look upon any attempt to warp that conscience not only as an impertinence, but as a sinister act. If you never could love Mr. P—— you are justified in refusing him.'—

'There's a good soul,' said she, playfully interrupting me; 'tell my father so; tell him that I will never marry any one whom I don't love; tell him I don't love Mr. P——; that I can't love Mr. P——, and that I never will love Mr. P——. Tell him this, and I'll reward you some day, by letting you into a secret: you shall know whom I do love. Try till your wits are gone, you'll never guess.'

Saying this, with a smile of more than usual animation, she nodded, and darted through the door into another room.

CHAPTER III.

MR. P——'S DISAPPOINTMENT.—THE FATHER RECONCILED.
—NOVEL SENTIMENTS.—SINGULAR MODE OF COMMUNICATION.—AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY.—CONSUMPTION.
—A LADY'S VANITY.—HER CONFESSION OF FAITH.—FALLACIES.

WHEN I reported to the father the result of this interview, he was anything but satisfied. I related to him the whole of our conversation, and he was as much surprised as myself, to hear that his daughter was in love, and as much puzzled to guess with whom. Mr. P—— was in ecstasies when he heard her decision, but they were the ecstasies of indignation, wrath, and disappointed affection. He talked of himself as an injured man, and of the fair girl who had, in such a summary manner, solved the problem of his conjugal chances, as one who had unjustifiably arranged her own free choice in hostility against him, and he vehemently protested that, out of sheer spite, he would make his will, leave his money to build cottages for houseless vagrants, and die a repining batchelor. He was, in truth, bitterly mortified at his repulse. He vowed never to enter the house again, in which his pride had been so unexpectedly humbled. He talked of blighted hopes, and worked himself into a

rhapsody. He was angry with the father for not exercising his authority, and enforcing obedience from his refractory child; he was angry with the mother, who did not scold her husband into a compliance with the wishes of this autumnal lover, and he was still more angry with me, because he took it into his jealous head that, instead of advocating his cause, I had been pleading against him. So fierce was his hostility, that he came no more to church, but had his pew stripped of its furniture, and locked up. He refused to pay his tithes, declaring that he would resist every demand, and spend his whole fortune, if required, to keep me out of my due. In proportion, however, as he was bitter towards me, he was charitable towards my poor parishioners, to many of whom he was a most generous benefactor.

The lovely girl who had been the cause of this, only laughed at what she called the old man's glumpiness, and rallied her father, who doted upon her, for minding the whims of her white-headed suitor of fifty-three. The stern severity of his friend's ill-humour rather reconciled her parent, who was a weak, though, in the main, a kind-hearted person, to the issue in which his friend's offer had terminated. He began to think that if his daughter had lost a rich and high-born husband, she had escaped the tyranny of an ill-humoured man. Still

he evidently was not easy. He missed the society of his old companion, which was not compensated for by mine, for my temperament was too saturnine, and my general habits not sufficiently mercurial to assimilate with his. He liked to sit after his dinner until the second bottle of port left scarcely a stain upon the bottom of the decanter. I detested such long sittings, and therefore used to leave him, whenever I dined at his table, to enjoy his second bottle in his own company.

The daughter continued to decline, but her spirits did not droop. Occasionally her fair cheek was suffused with a glow too ardent for health, and too legibly indicating the approach of that foe, by which we were all born to be vanquished. She still took no care of herself, and when I once ventured to hint at her delicate state, she smiled, and with a bright gleam of the eye, which only to my own mind confirmed my suspicions, said gaily, 'Oh, nothing hurts me.' At this time she had a dry teasing cough, her hands were always burning, and the pulses in every finger were perceptible, feeble, quick, and thrilling. She was evidently parched with inward fever; yet she would walk on the lawn long after the sun had gone down, in spite of the warnings of her medical man, or the interdictions of her parents.

Her declining state became, at length, so evident,

that other advice was called in. An eminent physician from Leeds came to see her, and the result of his interview was a confirmation of my worst suspicions. The father was thunderstruck, the mother paralyzed. The information came upon them like the sudden shock of an earthquake. They were not prepared for it in the slightest degree, though the evidence had been so palpable for months. The physician advised that they should immediately take their daughter to the south of France, or to Madeira; but he was well aware that they would only take her there to die. They knew not how to propose it to the unsuspecting girl without exciting her, as her love of home was unconquerable. I was therefore requested to sound her upon the subject. I began by remarking that she had lately grown thin.

‘Oh, no;’ she replied gaily, ‘not too thin, I dislike fat girls exceedingly, there is something very unfeminine in being fat.’

‘Yes, but —’

‘I beg your pardon, there is no but in the case; under no circumstances can a fat woman look feminine. I would rather be as slender as the stalk of a hyacinth, than have my bones covered with an encumbrance of gross flesh. To my mind I’m just what I should be, and I have therefore no desire to be stouter.’

‘Surely,’ said I, ‘you would wish to have flesh enough to keep you in health.’

‘So I have, I am not ill.’

‘You look more delicate than usual.’

‘Can a woman look too delicate? Delicacy is her highest moral and physical beauty; why then should you wish I had less of what constitutes the perfection of woman’s nature.’

‘But I spoke of delicacy neither in its physical nor in its moral acceptation, literally considered; I used it in a qualified sense, as implying bodily prostration. I fear your health is suffering.’

‘No, I assure you, no, you are quite mistaken; my health has been improving lately. See what a colour I have—I begin to fear I am getting too healthy.’

‘That colour may not be a proof of health, it may imply fever, and the physician does not think you are well. He recommends change of climate.’

‘Nonsense, change of climate! I hate doctors; they must say something, or how could they expect their fee. He knows nothing about me. He is an old woman,’ she said with some petulance.

‘Surely you cannot think that any man, well born and liberally educated, would be so base as to recommend your undertaking a long and painful journey, unless he really thought it would be for your benefit! No, believe me, he undoubtedly

thinks a change necessary for you, and as your parents wish it, I am sure you will readily give your consent.'

'Indeed, I shall not, for I am sure it would kill me to go abroad. I don't like to quit my home; and besides, I have an especial attraction to this spot. Don't you remember my telling you that although I did not love Mr. P——, I loved some one. Now try if you cannot guess who that some one is.'

'Really I cannot,—for in such matters I am the most unobserving person in the world.'

'I dare say you are. Well, then, since you are too dull to find out, take this Bible, and as soon as you get home, turn to the twelfth chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, and the seventh verse will make a marvellous discovery.' Saying this, she put a small pocket Bible into my hand, extorting from me a promise that I would not open it until I returned to the rectory-house.

I again made an effort to induce her to subscribe to her father's wishes, for the benefit of her health, but she continued deaf to all my entreaties, and I at length quitted her, with a pang imbittered by the consciousness I felt that she had but a short time to live.

I made the best of my way home, curious to ascertain what could be the nature of the dis-

covery I was to make in the sacred pages of the Bible; never for one moment imagining that it could in any way refer to the subject upon which she had so playfully spoken. On opening the book at the passage specified by her, my eye immediately fell upon the following words: 'And Nathan said to David, *Thou art the man.*' Under the four last, there was a strong pencil line. I could not mistake either the intent or signification of this ingenious mode of conveying a sentiment, but I was no less surprised than pained by the discovery. It had never occurred to me, for an instant, that I was the object of her attachment; and what pained me the more, was that, upon consulting my own heart, I found she was not the object of mine. I really felt a strong interest in everything which concerned her, but did not love her. Exquisite though her beauty was, it excited no emotion. It appeared to belong to a different order of nature, rather than to the fair correlative of man, formed for all the varieties of social affection. Hers was a loveliness which repelled human sympathy, and yet it was far beyond anything I had ever before, or have ever since, seen in woman. To a certain extent, I had misjudged her, for it never occurred to my mind that she could be capable of an affection beyond the immediate circle of her own family. It had always struck me, that

she could allow no one to share with herself a heart, of which self-love appeared to be the very aliment, and to direct every impulse. I was partially, and but partially deceived. She found there room for a secondary affection, but I never could value a divided heart. I saw no happiness in a love so bounded and questionable.

I confess, though I felt flattered by so signal a preference, I was under considerable embarrassment how I should communicate my feelings to this singular but interesting girl. Her unexpected declaration, communicated so ingeniously, but so solemnly, certainly increased the interest I had always taken in her happiness since my arrival in her neighbourhood. The more I considered the matter, the more I felt a glow in my breast towards her; yet my conscience had too plainly told me that it was altogether free from the stimulus of abstract affection. I soon became sensible that my heart was receiving an impression through my vanity, and I, therefore, stifled every ebullition as it arose; but the question with me was, how I should declare myself to the fair being whose affections I had so unconsciously won. It was clear she had not long to live; fearing, therefore, that, in her delicate state, an extreme opposition to any settled wish might produce serious consequences, especially in one who had never been accustomed to have a

single wish opposed, I came to the determination of allowing her to suppose that her feelings were reciprocated by me, but without expressly confirming it by words.

When we met, I simply told her how flattered I was by her preference,—kissed her white transparent fingers, and she seemed to take for granted that my feelings were too intense for utterance.

From this time, she treated me with a confidence that greatly increased my interest about her. I found that she had scarcely turned her thoughts to religion, and when I ventured, one day, to touch upon the subject, she said :

‘ Surely the Deity could never have brought into the world so beautiful a frame as mine, either to torment it here or to punish it hereafter. What harm have I done during my innocent life? Why, then, should I occupy myself with thinking upon gloomy things, and persuade myself to look upon God as an omnipotent terror, when the very charms with which he has invested this frail body satisfy me that I am here in the likeness of his divine image, encircled with a glory which can never die, Shall I confess to you that I love to gaze at myself, and to contemplate in myself such an exquisite work as none but Omnipotence could have formed? You smile. The foolish world may call me vain, but my conscience tells me that I do homage to

God in admiring the beautiful production of his hand; for although it is exhibited in my own person, is it, therefore, the less to be admired—the less a divine creation? I worship the Divinity in contemplating my own beauty, which is his boon. Such vanity as mine is a homage to God, and surely homage to him is a virtue.’

I was extremely struck by this ingenious logic. There was a fervency and sincerity about it, that convinced me the cold calculating arts of sophistry were not employed, however the sentiments expressed might seem to bear its colouring. With her it was earnest and unaffected conviction.

‘But my interesting logician,’ said I, ‘do you not know that the Almighty expects from us something more than mere privative good. We are to do what is right as well as to abstain from what is wrong; and therefore not to do good is virtually to do evil. If you have not made yourself acquainted with his laws and precepts, which we are expressly told were written for our learning, are you not continuing in an act of sin by neglecting to do a duty?—and you may rely upon it, that to forbear to do right is as bad as to transgress.’

‘Oh, dear,’ she replied, ‘you clergymen are so unconscionable: to tell you the truth, it makes me dull to read the Bible. I don’t understand it. I can’t trust in it; but I love God nevertheless, and

know him to be infinitely good, and just, and holy, and wise, and, above all, merciful,—and I am sure that he will never forsake me. What more can you desire?’

‘If you do not believe what he has himself recorded, you do not love him. You mistake your own feelings. If you doubt him, how can you rely upon him? If you mistrust him, how can you expect his favour?’

‘I neither doubt nor mistrust him; I only say, that I can’t trust in the Bible.’

‘Dear mistaken girl,’ said I, with fervor, ‘but suppose you should be suddenly cut off in such a state of criminal infidelity?’

‘I have no fear of that. I am an infidel against my will, over which I have no control! How can I believe what my convictions reject, in spite of my own volition. God is too good to punish us for what we cannot help. And shall I tell you why I have no fear of being cut off prematurely? I conceive that I was brought into the world such as I am, so immeasurably above the level of my sex, in personal distinction, as a living testimony in what beauty the Deity can clothe the objects of his creation when it pleases him. There was a special design in bringing me into the world! and why should he create such a model of form and feature, merely to cut it down like a vernal flower,

which withers but to be renewed, and is perpetuated through time by such periodical renovation? No! I feel that I am too beautiful to die in the fresh, fragrant morning of my youth, with so much loveliness of life pervading every faculty of my frame. I shall not die; believe me, God is too wise, too good, too just, to withdraw me from a scene which he created me to adorn, until I shall be no longer able to adorn it.'

In vain I strove to combat the strange fallacies with which her mind was imbued: they were immoveable. I could not stir her from the perilous position behind which she had intrenched herself, for she was in too delicate a state to be roughly or sternly assailed. I occasionally returned to the subject, but it at length became distressing to her, without turning, in the slightest degree, the bias of her sentiments. I was obliged, after a while, to desist, as such discussion excited without convincing her.

Such are the hollow delusions by which so many attempt to bolster up a sickly and wavering faith. They rest upon the doctrine of human irresponsibility, which is 'as the staff of a bruised reed, whereon, if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it.' It is the common fallacy to which the unbelieving resort, as a prop to preserve them from falling into the toil spun from the web of their own

sophistry. Alas ! such doctrines afford but a feeble security at the hour of death ; then the tawdry fabric of delusion vanishes, and leaves the mind a prey to disquieting doubts and appalling uncertainties. I foresaw that this unhappy girl had encircled herself with a girdle of thorns, which, sooner or later, would pierce into her bosom. I thought of her with deep and earnest sympathy.

CHAPTER IV.

NEAR PROSPECT OF DEATH.—A FATHER'S GRIEF.—HIS DAUGHTER'S GRADUAL DECLINE.—HER UNAPPREHENSIVENESS OF DANGER.—MR. P.—A RECONCILIATION.—MR. P.'S DISTRESS.—A MELANCHOLY DISCLOSURE.—THE INVALID RALLIES, RECEIVES THE SACRAMENT—DIES.

I HAD communicated to the father his daughter's unexpected declaration of attachment towards me, the morning after it was made. He heard me evidently with more surprise than satisfaction, but concurred with me, in thinking that it would be advisable not to thwart her in any whim or fancy, as it was evident she would not be long in a condition to entertain them. He was exceedingly distressed at the prospect of so soon losing his favourite child; his tears were copious and bitter whenever he referred to the subject, which he scarcely ever failed to do the moment we met. His house had already become a house of mourning; yet the invalid, although she beheld gloom and apprehension in every countenance, never for an instant felt her suspicion strengthened of her own precarious state.

She daily grew weaker and weaker, her cough became more and more pectoral, and she was at length obliged to keep her bed. She, nevertheless, had no apprehension of danger. She had a large

looking-glass placed by her bedside, in which she continually beheld and admired her still beautiful but fading features. To her there appeared no perceptible change. She saw the same personal loveliness, which she had ever traced in her own exquisite lineaments, and it was a real enjoyment to her to look at, and to admire them. When reminded how weak she had become, she would smile languidly, but playfully, and declare that she should be better. Occasionally when her father, overcome by the fierce conflict of grief, laid his throbbing temples upon the bed, and gave way to an uncontrollable passion of tears, she would kiss his hot flushed brow, and assure him, with such energy of self-conviction, that her illness only existed in his fancy, as half to persuade him he was exciting a premature alarm. Yet, when he looked at her bright sunken eyes, her wasted figure, her pale cheek, sometimes suffused with a deep but transient crimson, the recoil of suspended grief would strike upon his heart with redoubled force, and, with all his wealth, he became a most pitiable man.

The beautiful girl now treated me with that confidence which usually passes between those who are affianced to each other. I saw her daily, and though this was not at first agreeable to the parents, yet, when they perceived that opposition only ag-

gravated their daughter's malady, by exciting internal fever, which was gradually wasting her, they no longer offered an objection. I could not bring her to cast a thought upon that eternity to which she was so rapidly hastening. To her it was a dream, and she flung it from her thoughts, like an unwelcome vision of the night. I never saw her that she had not the looking-glass at her side, and it was a truly singular feature in her character, a moral idiosyncrasy, if I may so say, that the greatest enjoyment of her life was the contemplation of her own person, as reflected by the mirror beside her. I almost daily saw a change. She continually spat blood, but this did not seem in the least to alarm her, so fully was she possessed with the idea that God would not destroy so beautiful a work. She fancied herself the casket in which a heavenly gem was enshrined, and therefore placed beyond the reach of death until age should render her a fitter victim. I one morning asked if she never felt any apprehension of death?

‘None whatever,’ she replied; ‘I know I shall not die, as I am; I feel that my time is not yet come.’

‘Nevertheless, do you not think every person should be prepared for that trying hour which comes alike to all. There is surely no security against death.’

‘ But there are certain inward communications which never deceive us. I have a presentiment that I shall outlive my youth. It would not be the act of a wise and good Being to cut off a creature on whom he has so fairly stamped the impress of his own glorious image, and invested it with a beauty unrivalled among living things, in the very prime of that beauty’s dominion.’

‘ Do you not, however, every day see the most interesting among the young cut off, without a warning, in the very budding time of spring? And when did the Almighty make an exception in his dispensations, and give any single person a guarantee against death?’

‘ Well, say what you will, I am not to be frightened.’

‘ Believe me, I would not alarm you for the world: still I do think, notwithstanding, that you are indiscreet in not giving more attention to the possibility of an event, against which no one is ensured for one single hour. May I ask you, with an interest which none save your parents could feel for you, what is your idea of the probable state of your soul, should it, like that of the wicked man in the parable, be required of you this night?’

‘ That it would go to heaven.’

‘ Does your hope amount to a conviction?’

‘ I don’t see why it should not go there, for I am

sure it has never been so bad as to deserve abiding in a worse place.'

'My dearest girl, I see your confidence is not so strong as you think it; you want the consolation of religion—indeed you do. Seek that without delay, and see how it will confirm your hopes. Yours is a very unsettled trust; and I would have it firm as the rock which the sea dashes over, but stirs not.'

'Now don't worry me with your dull, moping declamations: you really make me tremble. Why should you thus torment me with disquieting thoughts?'

'In order that you may have quiet ones, when you will most need them.'

I saw it would be dangerous to pursue the subject further at this moment, and therefore desisted. It was quite astonishing with what morbid pertinacity she clung to the idea of outliving her youth. Her feebleness rapidly increased, still her sentiments and convictions remained the same.

Mr. P—— had never seen her since the period of his rejection as her suitor, and imagining that he might be unacquainted with her perilous state, I determined to call and inform him of it. He received me with a rigid civility, and a suppressed fierceness of aspect, which made me augur very unfavourably as to the probable issue of my visit.

'Sir,' I said, 'I am sure you will wave all

apology for this intrusion, when I tell you that the daughter of your unhappy neighbour is dying !’

‘Dying ! Bless me,’ said he, relaxing the haughty truculent glance of his quick eye, which in an instant became suffused with a tear. ‘You don’t mean that she is absolutely dying—that there is no hope?’

‘None in the least.’

He struck his forehead with the palm of his hand, and paced the room hurriedly for several moments, without uttering a word.

‘I had heard,’ said he, at length, ‘that she was ill, but of this I had never dreamed. Sir, it is an awful thing for one so lovely to go down with the worm, and be confounded with common earth. May I ask, is it the opinion of her physician, that she cannot live?’

‘It needs no physician to tell any one who now sees her that she is past hope.’

Mr. P—— was deeply moved. What he had heard disarmed him of all the anger he had so long cherished, and he expressed a desire to accompany me to the house of our mutual friend. I was rejoiced at the idea of a reconciliation taking place, for I knew Mr. P—— would be a consolation to the unhappy father, in his approaching bereavement.

The friends met with mutual welcome ; there was a tenderness in their reciprocal expressions of kindly and impulsive feeling, which affected me

exceedingly. The invalid having been prepared for the interview, Mr. P—— was ushered into her presence. She received him without emotion. As he stood gazing on her in speechless agony, I saw the big tears roll down his furrowed cheeks, filling every wrinkle, and suffusing his whole face. She did not appear in the slightest degree moved at these strong manifestations of feeling, and I could impute her strange insensibility to the perpetually recurring evidence of her danger, to nothing else but a monomania, which, like a sponge, absorbed all her perceptions that tended to this one point.

From henceforth Mr. P—— was daily at the house, and participated sincerely in his friend's distress. The lovely invalid was still so unconscious of her state, that the day after Mr. P——'s visit, she spoke to me upon the subject of making some arrangements for our marriage, as soon as she should be sufficiently recovered. I was pained beyond expression. I thought it would be both a cruel and criminal deception not to declare to her at once the impossibility of such an event. I approached the bed, and took her hand; it gently pressed mine; every finger quivered. Her pulse was hurried, but thin, and unequal. Every drop of blood seemed to have left her cheeks, which were as white as the snow before it reaches the mountain-top.

‘My love,’ said I, for I had now some time been in the habit of addressing her by this endearing title, ‘do you think yourself able to bear disappointment?’

‘O yes,’ she replied, faintly.

‘Then I fear our union, in this world, can never be.’

A slight tinge overspread her clear transparent skin, and her eye closed. She did not utter a word, but, rather hurriedly, withdrew her hand from mine.

‘The cause,’ I continued, perceiving that her pride was wounded more than her heart smitten, ‘is one which no human agent can control. I must, my dear girl, now disclose to you a fact, to which you have most unaccountably blinded yourself, but which I still hope you will meet with the fortitude of a resigned and enduring Christian. You will never rise from this sick bed. Yours, my fair lovely creature, is a sickness unto death. It is criminal to deceive you with vain hopes. The struggle would only be more terrible at the last, if the awful announcement were not made till then. You have repeatedly told me you fear not to die; may yours be the last end of the righteous.’

‘Not fear to die!’ she said hurriedly, her eyes opened to their full extension, and beaming with the intensity of two dark gems; ‘not fear to die? but I do fear to die. I am not prepared for death.’

This was, alas ! what I had fearfully anticipated.

I did all I could to prepare her for her trial, but she was restless and disquieted. She was not to be comforted ; still she could not believe that her hour was so nearly approaching.

It happened that, the following day, she rallied a little, and she caught at this gossamer-thread of hope, as if it was to sustain her through the dark valley of her coming trial. At our next interview she met me with a smile, and talked of recovery and of life with, to me, distressing energy. I attempted to dissipate her delusion, but in vain. She certainly appeared better, and was, therefore, persuaded the climax of her disorder had passed, and that she was rapidly recovering. The pertinacity with which she clung to life was a sad thing to witness. She would not allow a hint to be given of her dying : the idea was so terrible she could not endure it ; but the marvel was, that she really did shut it out from her thoughts, and brought her mind to the conviction that she should not yet go to her account. At my urgent entreaties, however, she allowed me to pray by her ; and I finally induced her to receive the sacrament. This seemed to quiet her, in spite of her unaccountable infatuation. Reduced as she now was, and so weak that she could, at times, scarcely raise her arms, her glass was constantly beside her. She did not appear

conscious that her beauty had faded, for she was still lovely. Even at the eleventh hour, her whole thoughts were chiefly absorbed in the contemplation of her own personal attractions. Nothing could abstract her from the one dear subject of admiration, save occasionally, when the mind seemed to be, for the moment, cloyed with the luxury of its own reflections. Though I now and then diverted her from this all-engrossing object, yet, like the bent bow, the greater the tension of the string the stronger the impulse of reaction, so, in proportion as her thoughts were turned from the centre to which they gravitated, their natural momentum was increased as soon as the resisting power was withdrawn, and they invariably returned, with renewed ardour, to their first and favourite tendencies.

I had a second time administered the sacrament, which she received with her whole family around her, who all communicated with her. After the exertion was over, she seemed composed; and we all quitted the room, hoping that she might sink into a quiet slumber. We were seated in an adjoining apartment, and Mr. P—— had joined the domestic circle, now assembled in this house of mourning. It was, in truth, a melancholy assembly. Our conversation was embarrassed and constrained. The father and mother of the invalid were evidently

suffering intense grief. Mr. P—— was silent, but visibly agitated, whilst I felt a load upon my heart which it would be a vain attempt to describe. My interest in the eternal welfare of that lovely creature, whom I knew to be languishing on the bed of death, in the adjoining chamber, was intense; this interest had, no doubt, been increased by the confession of her attachment towards me.

During a pause in the conversation, which had been carried on languidly and at intervals, we heard a sudden cry from the inner apartment. I was seated near the door, and, rushing in hastily, followed by the family and Mr. P——, witnessed a scene never to be forgotten. The unhappy girl was at the foot of the bed in her night-dress. She had grasped one of the bed-posts, but too manifestly in the pangs of dissolution. Her eye was directed upward, with a look so brilliant as to give an awful intensity to the expression of mental agony, which beamed from it with the piercing lustre of a diamond. Her brow was furrowed, her cheeks and lips bloodless: she gasped and clung to the bed-post, uttering, in a faint scream, ‘No, no!—I won’t die,—I can’t die,—I’m too beautiful to die! God of mercy crush me not! No, it shall not be—it cannot be.’

Her voice grew fainter—her head drooped; but suddenly raising it with singular energy, her eye

beaming with the same deep, lucid expression as before, she said, gaspingly, ‘What is this?—I cannot;—no—I cannot—no—no—I will—not—die.’

I had passed my arm round her waist; her head fell upon my shoulder; I heard no breath; I saw no motion; it seemed no longer to be a vital contact—I felt that she was dead.

CHAPTER V.

RETURN TO LONDON.—A VISIT TO THE OLD BAILEY.—TWO PRISONERS TRIED FOR MURDER.—CONDEMNED.—THE VIOLENCE OF ONE.—DRAGGED FROM THE COURT BLASPHEMING.—VISIT HIM IN HIS CELL.—HIS RAGE.—OUR CONVERSATION.—HE STRIKES ME.—DETERMINE TO PERSEVERE.—HIS ANGER.—HE CONTINUES INTRACTABLE.—REPEAT MY VISIT, BUT WITH NO BETTER SUCCESS.

SHORTLY after the sad event just recorded, I exchanged my living for one in the city of London, of which I immediately took possession. I preferred a city to a country life; and though I lost something by the exchange, yet I was satisfied upon the whole with the transaction. Not long after my arrival, I obtained, as before, an alternate preacher-ship at a fashionable chapel, which I was enabled to undertake, as the service at my church in the city commenced just an hour earlier than that of the chapel. On the day my turn came, therefore, I had no difficulty in reaching it in time for the sermon. As I had before done, it was my good fortune to give great satisfaction to the congregation, and I was, consequently, invited to their houses; thus the sphere of my acquaintance soon became considerably enlarged. I visited many persons of wealth and

distinction, and being, likewise, thrown much among the poor in my own parish, I had numerous opportunities of seeing the various shades of human life, in its extreme and middle tints, through all its different modes and gradations of social circumstances, from the gorgeous colours of regality, down to the dark and repulsive hues of absolute destitution.

As there were many poor in my parish, I was frequently among them, but, with some few exceptions, had no reason to be much satisfied with my labours. I found that my visits were seldom welcome. Unless I left money, I was never considered as leaving a blessing behind me; and, whether the persons visited were in distress or not, such a blessing was invariably expected. In numerous instances, I was obliged to make them suffer disappointment, knowing, from experience, that if I did not, I should only furnish them with the means of doing what it was my duty, so far as I was able, to prevent. It did not appear to me that I was much esteemed by them, though I endeavoured to perform my duty conscientiously; but among the lower orders, who are generally distressed through their own improvidence, gratitude is a sickly virtue. This, however, did not deter me from doing all I could to administer both to their physical and to their spiritual wants.

I had been about a year in London, after having

exchanged my living in Yorkshire, when passing, one morning, by the Old Bailey, I was induced to enter and hear the criminal trials. Just as I got into the court, two prisoners were placed in the dock, to be tried for robbery and murder. The appearance of one of these men was singularly striking. He was a tall muscular person, of fine commanding figure, with a remarkably handsome countenance, severely stern, and expressive of indomitable resolution. His scalp was bare, and extremely white, forming a strong contrast with the bronze hue of his nether features. The black short hair was just crisped round his temples, which were prominent, smooth, and expansive. The man stood with his arms crossed, and his full dark eye fixed upon the witnesses, as they severally entered the box and gave their evidence. Not a muscle of his face stirred. The evidence was decisive, and both prisoners were condemned to die. It appeared that they had stopped, on the highway, a person who resisted their endeavours to obtain his money, when one of them shot him through the head.

The tall prisoner, of whom I have spoken, manifested not, during the trial, the slightest symptom either of remorse or of fear. His eye never once quailed; and when the verdict of guilty was pronounced by the foreman of the jury, his features relaxed into a grim smile. Casting a

fierce glance round the court, he uttered a malediction so deep and bitter, that there was an expression of awe upon every countenance. The judge rose with dignity, and rebuked the bold blasphemer, who darted upon him a look of withering scorn; and, when sentence of death was passed, assailed him and the jury with frightful imprecations. He was at length dragged from the dock, with much difficulty, denouncing curses, and breathing blasphemous defiance against God and man. His violence was appalling. Even the judge trembled. The profound silence of terror seemed to hush the whole court.

Outrageous as had been the prisoner's conduct, there was a certain expression of sentiment in his countenance which had interested me extremely. There appeared to me something, beneath the repulsive surface, not obvious to general scrutiny, which bore no natural affinity to the brutal violence he had recently displayed. My impression was so strong, that I felt an invincible desire to see and converse with this ferocious man. Good, like truth, is often hidden in a well, and remains undiscovered, not because it does not exist, but because the surrounding darkness hides it from the superficial gaze of common observers. Virtue may abide in the human heart, though obscured by the operation of depraved habit which challenges every eye, while

the good that lies beneath the surface continues inert, only because opportunity has either been wanting, or not been seized upon, to call it into action. Many a gem remains undiscovered in the mine, which will never receive the lapidary's polish; but the gem is still there, and requires only to be discovered, and to have its hidden splendour unfolded, to be prized for its beauty and its radiance.

I could not account for the strength of motive which prompted me to see this man. It seemed to me as if there was a supernatural impulse impelling me towards him; for, in spite of his violence, I did not believe him to be utterly depraved. The pitiful cowardly blubbing of the other prisoner, who whined, fell upon his kness, and exhibited the most recreant indications of terror, did not in the least move me. I fancied I saw the elements of higher qualities in his companion, which determined me to visit him in his cell.

This I asked permission to do, and it was granted by the proper authorities. I desired the turnkey to ask the man if he had any objection to my conversing with him. The accommodating official acquiescing in my desire, I followed him to the prisoner's cell. He opened the ponderous door, and, standing at the entrance of the gloomy teneament, inquired of its inmate if he had any objection

to be visited by a clergyman. I was immediately behind him, and heard distinctly all that passed.

‘Tell your clergyman,’ said the criminal, in a deep, sullen tone, ‘that I hate him as I hate all hypocrites; he had, therefore, better not come near a desperate delinquent, who does not fear to express his hate otherwise than by words.’

‘You refuse to see him, then?’—‘Yes.’

‘But he bade me say, he should take it as a favour if you will allow him to visit you.’

‘You’ve had your answer; begone! Can a priest, think ye, extinguish the fires of hell? Go, and let me neither see you nor any of your spiritual quacks, who pretend to cast the roses of hope under a man’s feet, while he is struggling in a state halter.’

Perceiving that he was gradually rising into violence, I gently passed by the turnkey into the murky apartment, and, bidding him close the door, was left alone with this violent and implacable man. Still I felt not the slightest alarm. His aspect, indeed, was not such as to conciliate confidence; on the contrary, it expressed fierce and bitter passion; nevertheless I was in no degree terrified.

‘My friend,’ said I, firmly, but with the kindest tone I could assume, ‘I come not to intrude upon your sorrows, but to afford you consolation. Yours is too sad a condition’—

He interrupted me fiercely. 'Don't preach here,' said he, grinding his teeth and clenching his hand, 'don't whine your cant consolations to one who thinks no more of dying than he would of dashing a silly parson's brains out against these stones.' Saying this, he seized me rudely by the collar, and shook me with considerable violence.

'I am not to be diverted from my purpose,' said I, calmly, 'by any discourtesy which your passion may offer me—I can pity and forgive you. I am here on a mission of peace.'

'Why do you dare intrude upon my privacy, when I have not sought your officious services? My cell is my castle; and, though a doomed man, my will is still free, and I am not bound to listen to you, or to any one, against my will. Hear what I say. Mouth no more of your devil's logic to me; or, by the sun that shines where I shall never again behold him, unless he shed his transient glories upon the scaffold on which I am to die, I'll strangle thee, as I would a rat, that disturbed my slumber.'

'Nay, I know your heart better than you do: it is not in your nature to commit an act of such deliberate and unmanly cruelty.'

As I said this, I saw the pupil of his eye dilate with a sudden expression of tenderness, which convinced me that I had not misjudged him; but

almost instantly resuming his wonted fierceness of aspect, he exclaimed, elevating his voice to a pitch of rage,

‘I tell you, man, it is of no use to attempt either to conciliate, or to melt me. Your intrusion is an officious impertinence; and if you do not instantly quit this place, your life may not be secure another five minutes.’

‘You don’t know yourself, my good friend; I am satisfied such an act is not among the promptings of your nature;—and besides, what would my death avail you? Listen to me. As the Almighty shall judge me, I come to you as the messenger of consolation. I would strengthen you for the trial you will so shortly have to undergo.’

He smiled bitterly, then relapsing into one of his rageful moods, deliberately approached me, his eyes flashing fire, and doubling his large fist, he pressed the knuckles painfully against my forehead, and muttered in a low hoarse tone, with his teeth set, ‘This is the last warning I shall give you; there is a spirit within me that will not be controlled. Refuse to quit me, and the consequences be upon your own head.’

‘I cannot consent to stop short in my duty; I am God’s minister, and were no longer worthy to be among his accredited servants, if I shrank from performing any act especially belonging to my ministry. Do bear with me, and hear me.’

‘I will not,’ he said, elevating his voice almost to a roar. ‘Will you go?’

I attempted to take his hand, when he struck me severely on the left temple, and I fell backward senseless. How long I remained so I know not, but when I recovered, I found my head raising upon a pillow, my neckcloth loose, and my shirt-collar opened. It was evident that the prisoner had assisted in recalling me to myself. I was more than ever confirmed that he was the creature of impulse—of terrific impulse indeed—but not altogether that which he seemed to the common eye. My temple was considerably swelled, and the brow contused, but I rose with some difficulty, and said :

‘I forgive you from my soul ; will you not then forgive me ? You have avenged my intrusion ;—having now suffered the penalty, look upon me not as your enemy, but as your friend.’ I extended my hand. He turned away sullenly. But there was no longer any expression of ferocious anger. He was silent. I could not induce him to speak. He would not even look at me. The moment I touched upon any point of religious allusion, he became irritated, paced the cell hurriedly, but still maintained his silence.

I remained with him about an hour, but utterly failed, as it appeared to me, in making the slightest impression. Two things, however, I perceived,

which gave me hopes of eventually turning the current of his spleen, and bringing him to a more profitable state of mind. He was evidently not only an educated, but an intelligent man; and he had satisfied me that he was not entirely destitute of sensibility.

The next day I repeated my visit; he was still morose and uncivil; he even occasionally interrupted me with bitter imprecations, but attempted no violence. I could perceive that he felt some compunction at having struck me upon the preceding day, for my forehead was swelled, and greatly discoloured; and I perceived, too, more than once, when his glance had been casually arrested by my disfigurement, that his eye relaxed into a momentary expression, almost amounting to tenderness, which revived my hopes of eventually subduing the stubborn asperity of his temperament.

Trifling as this encouragement was, I instantly availed myself of it, and holding out my hand, begged he would look upon me as his friend; but he turned from me, with the same morose displeasure as before, and maintained the same implacable silence. At length he became irritated by my perseverance, and pushed me rudely from him; but I was not to be deterred; and approaching him, with uplifted hands, entreated his confidence.

I can scarcely account for the strong impulse

which urged me thus to succumb and humble myself to this ferocious man : but I had an uncontrollable presentiment that I should be able to evolve the fairer elements of a nature now shrouded in the gloom of circumstances, and show the hidden light which passion had obscured. The trial was indeed arduous, and I had hitherto found little encouragement to give either stability or strength to my expectations.

I did not again, for the present, make the slightest allusion to religion, perceiving that it was necessary to soften the sullen and morbid temper of his mind, before it could endure any thing of a really spiritual tendency. I was happy to see that on this day, amid all his rudeness, he was at least forbearing. I did not once allude to the personal violence with which he had already treated me, and it struck me that he appreciated my motive : still he would not listen to me. I, at length, rose to depart, and took his hand, which he did not absolutely withhold, though he withdrew it, but not urgently, so soon as I had grasped it. As I reached the door, he said, in a severe, but not stern tone,—

‘ Now you have twice intruded upon me, to my extreme annoyance and dislike. I do not see, that because I am a condemned criminal, I should be exposed to the officious benevolence of any

man, however worthy his motive, when I tell him that his zeal for my welfare is to me a positive plague. I have already used you with violence—you brought it upon yourself, and I have nothing fairly to charge myself with, in having treated you as I did. Your perseverance in visiting me may expose you to similar injury, for I am neither master of my words, nor do I care to suppress my passions. Take warning then, and let this be our last meeting.'

CHAPTER VI.

REPEAT MY VISIT TO THE PRISONER.—HE IS STILL OB-
DURATE.—CONTINUE MY VISITS DAILY.—HIS OBDURACY
AT LENGTH RELAXES.—ST JOHN'S GOSPEL.—HE AC-
KNOWLEDGES HIMSELF OVERCOME. — CONFESSES HIS
ERRORS.—SOLICITS MY FUTURE VISITS.—PROMISES TO
GIVE ME THE HISTORY OF HIS LIFE.—RELATES IT.

I QUITTED the prisoner less dissatisfied with my visit than on the preceding day. From something that had transpired since the trial, he and his companion were respited for three weeks. The following morning I again visited his cell. He was less austere than usual—his spirit, no doubt, having been somewhat quieted by the respite which had only been just communicated to him, when I entered his prison. Upon this occasion, I determined somewhat to change my mode of address, and try if I could elicit any lurking affection, which might aid me in my ultimate purpose.

‘ My friend,’ said I, ‘ the King having granted you a short extension of life, the opportunity is, perhaps, afforded me of doing you a kindness, for which I only ask your good will. Have you a mother, a wife, a sister, or any one dear to you upon earth, to whom you would desire a message to be conveyed ? Command me, and I will be the

bearer of your communication to any part of the kingdom.'

He paused: his lip gently quivered, but so slightly that I could scarcely perceive it, and only for a single instant.

'No,' he said, 'I do not require your services. It is courteous of you to offer them, but did I desire to apprise any one of my condition, I should employ some other messenger. I candidly tell you that you have not gained my confidence.'

Though there was nothing very encouraging in this avowal, yet the tone in which it was uttered greatly increased my hope. There was no irritability: no courtesy, it is true, but still none of that truculent asperity which had characterized all his replies until now.

'Have you a father?'

'No.'

'A mother?'

'No.'

'Sisters?'

'No.'

'Have you no relations?'

'Ay; but what of that? I wish not to disturb their peace. They cannot save me from hanging, and my death will be to them nothing more than a hideous dream. It will be forgotten as the darkness passes.'

‘ I have no right to inquire into the affairs of your family, but can only say, that if you have any communications to make, I am ready to be the herald of your wishes, even to the extremity of the kingdom.’

He again shortly declined my offer, and relapsed into one of his fits of moody silence. I was struck with these alternations of temper, as developements of character, not upon the whole unfavourable, and was more than ever encouraged to hope, that by patience I should win this stubborn mind to sensibility and to penitence.

I quitted him now for the third time, determined to persevere in seeing him every day until the sentence of the law should be executed upon him. He had invariably refused to see the Ordinary of the prison. The turnkey expressed his surprise at my long daily visits, when, as he said, the man appeared to be as savage as a bear, and would not give him a civil word. This I could easily understand, knowing the prisoner’s character.

I continued to visit him in the same way, for nine successive days, but apparently with little success. He always grew turbulent the moment I introduced a topic of religion. He was however, upon the whole, sufficiently patient, though I could never entice him into a lengthened discussion upon any point.

On the tenth morning I found him calm, but more than usually taciturn. I could scarcely draw a word from him; nevertheless, he manifested no sign of irritation. After a while he seated himself on his bed; I seized the opportunity, knelt beside him, and prayed earnestly. My prayer was offered up for all sorts and conditions of men. I made no especial allusion to his spiritual state, but supplicated God's mercy for sinners of all classes, kinds, and degrees, including myself among them, as requiring Divine Grace no less than the most guilty. As I proceeded, I saw that he was moved; an emotion was kindling within him, yet so faintly was it portrayed upon his naturally rigid lineaments, that nothing but a close observation of the working of his feelings would have enabled me to detect it. When I concluded, he joined in a fervent Amen.

This was the first and only indication he had yet given of a devotional impulse. I took his hand. He did not withdraw it. I murmured a blessing upon him.

'It is strange,' said he, at length, mildly, 'that you should give yourself so much trouble about one whom you must perceive to be a worthless wretch, since I am so insensible to your kindness, and have already repaid it with brutal violence.'

I told him it was my duty to bear and to forbear;

but that I had particularly persisted in visiting him because I felt assured that he did not know himself, — that he was altogether not what he seemed, and that I had determined to use my best endeavours to bring to the surface the good which was in him only obscured, not extinct.

He smiled incredulously, yet there was a forbearance, and even a suavity, in his manner, which assured me. He listened to me with attention, and I was, at length, induced to lay the New Testament before him. He looked upon it, but his eye wandered languidly, sometimes vacantly, over the sacred pages. I took up the book and began to read. He listened. His attention increased as I proceeded, until his countenance finally expressed an interest in what he heard. I turned to that beautiful passage in St. John's Gospel, where the woman taken in adultery is brought before Christ. His feelings were roused. His eyes brightened. I read in a subdued and tremulous voice, for I was deeply affected by the evident impression which this Divine history was producing. A tear glistened in his eye, the cheek and lip visibly quivered. I was so overcome at the effect wrought upon this lately ferocious man, that when I concluded the eloquent narrative, I laid down the book, and burst into tears. They were tears of strong emotion, but of joy. He cast his full black eyes,

beaming with intense intelligence, upon me, directed them towards heaven, and uttered in a deep tone of calm but solemn devotion, ‘Saviour, thou hast conquered!’ I again took his hand, and grasped it with fervour; he returned the pressure; and I felt that the man was reclaimed.

‘Do you know, Sir,’ he said, at length, ‘I am astonished at my feelings. You have prevailed; and I am henceforth whatever you desire. There still remain eleven days before the sentence of the law will be executed upon me. I, who have hitherto repelled your presence, now earnestly invite it, and hope you will see me daily, until I am called to expiate my crime in the manner which the law requires. It is fit that you should know something of the person in whom you have taken so singular an interest. To-morrow, therefore, if you favour me with your accustomed visit, I will relate to you some particulars of my life, which will, perhaps, satisfy you, that I am less a ruffian than I may appear to the world; and show that a man’s dark side may alone be visible to his fellow-man; but that, nevertheless, the bright and the dark alike exist, though only one be obvious to general scrutiny.’

‘My friend,’ said I, ‘you excited in my breast an interest from the first moment I beheld you because to me there appeared a something in you

to be discovered. I trust I have come at the ore at last, and that it will still exhibit the true min-tage before you leave this world.'

'Nay, I shall have to tell you things, which will show a nature reckless, impatient of wrong, implacable in its revenge, yet withal—but you shall judge. Come to me to-morrow, and hear my history—it is a marked one, and the sum of it, as you perceive, will be a halter.'

'To-morrow I will be with you betimes. Meanwhile think of what I have said. Remember your time is short, and you have to make your peace with heaven. You have the sacrifice of a contrite heart to offer to your God. Offer it earnestly and devoutly. Let it not be a vain oblation. Let it be but fervent, and it will go up as incense upon the aspirations of a devout hope and holy affiance.'

'Well, well, I shall not forget your admonition.'

I quitted him. He was calm, and even cheerful. There was no longer any of that asperity which had, up to this day, invariably characterized his conduct towards me. I left a Bible with him. The change in the feelings of this strange being did not in the least surprise me, for I fully expected it, and was prepared to hear in the narrative of his life, which he expressed a desire to communicate to me, much that should sufficiently

account for the unfavourable circumstances which had so painfully coloured the closing period of his existence.

It is surprising how little we become really acquainted with human nature, by looking superficially at the actions of men, as they rise to observation, in our common social intercourse with each other. How false are the conclusions we frequently come to, upon the merits and demerits of our fellow-creatures ! Our observation must pierce much deeper than the visible sign seen in the mere overt act, or we shall mistake the mask for the countenance ; and thus, looking at a fictitious index, read the heart through a false interpreter.

Early next day I repaired to the prisoner's cell. He arose to meet, and welcomed me courteously. His manner was frank and even gentle, and there was a general gesture of ease about his whole deportment which shewed me evidently now, though I had already in a less decided degree remarked it, that he was a man of education, and not of plebeian origin.

‘ This is truly kind, sir,’ he said. ‘ I have never felt your visit to be a favour before, but now I really do take it as one, and trust you will receive my acknowledgments with the same spirit in which they are tendered : — they are the acknowledgments of one who makes them, for the

first time. Ay, sir, my life has been one of stern interdiction, of passionate struggles, and of fierce resistance. The end which I am to meet, is the fitting termination of such a life. But I anticipate. Be seated, and you shall hear.'

I did not interrupt him, but sitting down upon his homely bed, he placed himself beside me, and commenced his interesting narrative.

'I was born of wealthy parents; the only son of a severe and inexorable father. He was a man of family and influence in his native county, but rather respected for his rigid integrity than beloved for the amenities of his nature. In fact, of these he had none. He was an obdurate, uncompromising, person, strict to the very letter in performing the assumed obligations of life, and as unbending in exacting from others an unqualified obedience to those rules which he had laid down as comprising his own moral and social canon. He was in every act, in every thought, in every feeling, a fierce, haughty bigot — a bigot in religion, a bigot in morals, a bigot in social government: and thus, as is almost invariably the case, the bigot merged in the tyrant.

'My mother was a weak woman; and having been inoculated with her husband's religious fervour, thought no persons good who did not say a long grace before every meal, and devote several

hours out of the daily twenty-four to praying, while she herself spent a large portion of her time in judging her neighbours, and condemning them in God's name, because they happened to be of a different way of thinking from herself and her husband. They both prayed and gave alms continually; but there was neither charity in their religion, nor religion in their charity. My father never forgave a provocation, and my mother followed him, with scrupulous exactness, in all his thoughts, words, and works.

‘I was the offspring of their mature years; my sire being forty-one, and my mother thirty-seven, when I was ushered into the world. I was brought up under extreme and intolerant restriction. Even before I could understand the meaning of religion, or comprehend its obligations, I was forced to kneel until my young limbs ached; and when my spirit rebelled against such untimely discipline, I was beaten into obedience. This strictness of government, to which I was thus early subjected, was never softened by any acts of kindness; I grew up under a rigour which was so excessive and unmitigated, that at length my parents, my home, and religion became, one and all, objects of my utter detestation. My temper was naturally violent, and this tendency was confirmed by the daily tyranny to which I was exposed. I had no

respite from it, so that I absolutely lived in perpetual "gall and bitterness of soul." The severity with which my father frequently chastised me, instead of crushing my spirit, inflamed it into fierce rebellion, and even before I had attained the age of twelve years, I had made up my mind, when the opportunity should occur, of showing a headlong and intractable resistance.

‘ When twelve years old I was placed at school. I bore a letter to the master, containing a strong injunction to put me under the most rigid restrictions; and this was so faithfully observed, that on balancing evils, I thought my home the least of the two. I was goaded to desperation. My very soul was stung by the harshness of paternal domination, and I writhed under the vulgar despotism of my parents’ accredited deputy. The natural keenness of my temperament was daily ground to an edge, until at length it became the formidable instrument of my own misery.

‘ One day, a school-fellow, about my own age, having excited me by contradiction, I struck him with a large clasp-knife. He received the full force of the blow, given under the impulse of excessive irritation, upon the back of his hand. It severed the tendons, and he was lamed for life. My stubborn spirit would acknowledge no compunction. I was flogged with a severity that

confined me to my bed for several days, but it roused a devil to life within me, and from that moment the cherub of peace was banished from my bosom.

‘ While the poor boy, whom I had wounded, was suffering the undeserved penalty inflicted by my brutality, I frequently felt a pang as I saw his pale countenance, when he was recovering from the immediate danger of the wound. A thousand times I could have embraced him, and implored his pardon for the savage outrage—but a stubborn pride withheld me. I struggled against the rising ebullition, and repelled it. Often have I curled my lip in fictitious scorn, in the presence of that much-injured youth, when my heart yearned to tell him its emotion. My haughty temper placed a mask upon my heart; and so repelling was the disguise, that he whom I had so deeply injured, shrank from me, whenever I approached him, with fear and trembling; still, in secret, I was deeply moved.

‘ My misery was extreme. My life appeared to me a wilderness without an oasis, and young as I was, with savage and reckless determination, I braced my mind to suffering. I was shunned by my school-fellows, as a morose thing, with whom all intercourse was interdicted. My pedagogue treated me as a rebel, from whom

even the common boon of pity should be withheld; and my father looked upon me as an outcast from Heaven, from whom God's endearing attribute of mercy was withdrawn, and who, therefore, was thus cut off from the reciprocations of all human sympathies. I was, as it were, alone in the world. Stubborn as my nature was, I nevertheless perceived that the fountains of feeling were not dried up within me. I had often deep and intense emotions. My bosom continually recoiled from the strong shock of passion, into moods of tenderness. The flow of morbid exasperation occasionally ebbed into the calm of profound sensibility.'

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRISONER'S HISTORY CONTINUED.

‘ THIS state of things could not last ; the tension of my mind was too strong for endurance ; but it at length sought relief in the affections of an amiable and lovely girl, who, I am sure, if my course had been pursued with her, would have won me back to peace, and cast a glory round the dim sphere of my existence, that has ever since been eclipsed by those dreary circumstances into which my dark and bitter destiny has compelled me.

‘ The object of my attachment was the daughter of a lieutenant in the navy, who had nothing for the maintenance of himself and daughter but his half-pay, and a small pension for the loss of an arm. Still they lived in homely comfort. The fair Lucy was a kind-hearted, innocent girl, not beautiful, but of so affectionate a nature, that she won all hearts ; and after she had won mine, I loved her with an affection intense in proportion as she was the only object that had ever awakened within my bosom the sentiment of true devotion. She completely tamed my refractory spirit down to that of a compliant thing, which in her presence found a repose before

unknown, and a delight in doing her bidding that seemed like the discovery of a new sense. I had never until now known what happiness, or even what true enjoyment, was. A new atmosphere was brightening around me. A green spot was growing up in the desert of my existence, when a sudden blight passed over the blooms which were hourly overspreading it, and I was left once more a doomed and blasted thing. From this moment the sombre colours of my life became engrained, and they have never since known change. There has not been one bright hue among them.

When my father heard of my attachment to the lieutenant's daughter, with the cold malignity of a demon, he determined to thwart my purpose. He had the audacity to fall upon his knees before God, and beseech Him that he might be enabled to subdue my rebellion, as he called it, and commanded me to kneel and unite in his prayer. I refused with loud indignation. I was now twenty, stout and muscular as an ancient athlete, strong and active as the tawny lion,—equally impatient of opposition, and ever ready to avenge a wrong. I listened to my father's prayer with scorn and disgust. I saw his dull gray eye roll inward with all the earnestness of resolved and unalterable purpose, and I heard his voice pronounce those unnatural suppli-

cations, which were virtually nothing more than audacious blasphemies against God's justice, though uttered with the tone and in the language of the humblest imploration.

On rising from his knees, with his eyes half shut, and turning upon me his sharp, withered countenance, on which was engrossed the legible record of immutable determination, he solemnly assured me, that not only would he never consent to my marrying the girl of my selection; but, if I did not, from that moment, abandon all thoughts of a matrimonial alliance with her, I should cease to be his son. I smiled bitterly at his callous objurgations. His savage, his monstrous opposition, bore down all feelings of decorum. I laughed at, and defied him. He had forbidden all thoughts of a conjugal connexion, and I fiercely taunted him with suggesting an intercourse alike abhorrent to divine and human laws. I told him his religion was a mockery, and, worked up at last to an uncontrollable acerbity of spirit, cursed him and that religion which had converted him into such a monster of domestic tyranny.

But I mistook the instrument. Religion had not perverted him, he had perverted religion, and I now live to repent that curse; but it has passed my lips, and I must abide it at the reckoning. If

there be a great and last assize for all, that father who cast a foul blight over the spirit of his son, and stifled every bud of promise in his youthful heart, shall stand before the Arbiter, stripped of the fictitious robe of righteousness, and shudder under the awful denouncement that shall cut him off from all hope in an eternal world. I shall see this in a state of things where earthly relationships will not awake a pang for those that are cast out into the "blackness of darkness."

'I quitted my father's roof in a perturbation of mind not to be described, and sought shelter under that of the father of her to whom my young faith was pledged. I offered instantly to marry her; but this proposal was over-ruled by her more considerate parent, who pointed out to me that, if my natural father should put his determination into practice, and cut me off, I had nothing save a single hundred a year which had been left me by my god-father. It was suggested that I should embrace some profession, and agreed, that when I was in a fair way of obtaining a comfortable subsistence, I should espouse the object of my choice. In this plan I cheerfully acquiesced, feeling confident that, with my energies of mind and constitutional strength, I should be in a condition, ere long, to give Lucy a home. But how soon are the fallacies of human expectation

realized before us. Disappointment springs up in our path with the elastic coil of that mighty serpent which hugs the tiger in its deadly embrace, and, in a moment, does the work of death, where, a few moments before, life was in its full operation of vigour and of power.

‘The only parent of my beloved suddenly died, and she was left without a human protector. I was then at a distance from home, being engaged in a speculation that took me into the north. At the period of her bereavement, she did not know where to address to me a communication of the melancholy event. Her grief was most intense,—silent, but absorbing. I had the following particulars, afterwards, from her own mouth. She had not a soul near to condole with, or take from her a portion of that sad burden inseparable from the death of those who are near and dear to us. Her neighbours offered their officious consolations, but, in the depths of her agony both of mind and heart, she had to direct all the minute matters of the funeral; and when all was prepared, she followed, alone, to its silent home, her father’s last earthly remains. This was not her saddest trial. What followed is the great black link in my destiny, that has chained me to misery, and worn my soul down into the gross and carnal thing which you have witnessed. I have never

ceased to feel the deep and indurating gall of that accursed gyve.

‘Shortly after the death of Lucy’s father, to her astonishment, mine called upon her and offered her the protection of his house. It was a specious but horrible proposal, as the issue proved. She looked upon it as a brightening after the storm, and gladly embraced it. She was artless as the unfledged dove, and her uncorrupted bosom yearned towards the father of the man she loved. Pictures of reconciliation and of peace, between the angry parent and discarded son, floated in fairy visions before her, and she repaired to my paternal home with a sad but yet a lighter heart. My father received her courteously, though coldly, and my mother’s constrained politeness at first damped the buoyancy of her young feelings; these, however, were soon composed by the assurances of welcome.

Knowing that my parents were extremely rigid in their views of religion, she confided in this knowledge as a safeguard against wrong. She had not, she could not have the slightest suspicion of any sinister intention; but, alas, how soon was she doomed to be deceived. Within a fortnight after her reception under my paternal roof, I returned, and found her an outcast from her own and my parent’s home, an injured and a degraded being. It was a deed of hell,—but I can endure to repeat

heartless as it was demonical, and I was involved in her suffering. My heart swelled against the man who had thus flung her into the gulf from which no human hand could drag her; and, in my secret soul, I vowed a deep and sanguinary revenge. No ear heard the vow; my tongue did not utter it, but it was breathed from my exacerbad spirit with an intense,—a blasting expiration. I loathed the name of father. I sought him in his den of infamy,—in that house where the mockeries of religion had been made the base panders to his abominable malice,—where, with blasphemous prayers upon his lips, he had plotted, and, by means of his infernal agent, accomplished, the ruin of a woman almost without an equal. I sought the hoary hypocrite. He was my father. The name was a discord, and the sight of that withered representative of paternity a bane. I looked upon him with the glance of a demon; I taunted him with his hypocrisy; I denounced him as a traitor to his God,—as a base conspirator against his child,—as a disgrace to the species with whom he claimed a human kindred. In the first paroxysm of my passion, I spat upon him. He ordered me to quit his threshold. I refused to stir. He laid his hand upon my collar, and I struck him senseless to the earth. I saw the blood stream from his mouth and *nostrils*, and indulged in a ferocious joy as I looked

upon the hoary father and villain, lying prostrate under the arm of a son whom he had so irreparably wronged.

‘I quitted his doors for ever. His friend, the instrument of his base scheme of pollution, was not in the house when I entered it, or I should have murdered him upon the spot. My vow of retribution was recorded, and I was determined that its accomplishment should be signalized; but the consummation of my vengeance was delayed.

‘After quitting my father’s house, I sought the unhappy girl, into whose cup of bright and radiant life he had so mercilessly poured a foul and fœtid increment. From this moment she declined. I soon saw that she had not long to live. There was a worm at the core of the languishing flower; and I watched, with intense agony of sorrow, the daily drooping of one of the purest spirits that ever emanated from the great source of life. Within the short space of six weeks, she died in these arms, and I was alone in the world,—a blighted and a blasted thing,—alone and superlatively wretched. I became a hardened and a desperate man.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRISONER'S HISTORY CONTINUED.

‘THE phases of moral infirmity gradually become more and more distinct when injury once forces us to throw off all restraint, and defy the opinions of men. I had now no care for the judgment of the world, and held converse with beings desperate as myself; set at defiance the restrictions of religion, and soon ceased to be guided by any tie, either social or moral. My father died, without leaving me a shilling. I cursed his memory, and smiled bitterly at the impotent malice which followed him to his eternal home.

‘After my mother's death, the whole of the property went to distant relations, and I was left without a farthing or a friend upon earth. The small income which I possessed, independent of my father, had been long consumed. I had no regular means of employment, having ceased to follow any settled pursuit, and was, therefore, left to my wits for a maintenance. I gambled, as you may suppose; from gambling the ascent to swindling is a quick and direct step. The moment a man who has no

money resorts to desperate games of chance for his daily bread, he becomes a sharper—one of the worst of villains.

‘ I had no character I cared to preserve; no hope of common comfort in this life; no object in the world to love;—I therefore ran heedlessly on my course, without fear or reflection; bounding from sin to sin, like a ball set in motion at the top of a rugged and steep descent,—conscious at the same time that I should go on in my wild career, until it should be stopped for ever. I was a disappointed, and, consequently, a reckless man. The one great absorbing thought of my life was revenge. I had hitherto been disappointed, because the author of my misery and of her ruin, which induced that misery, had gone abroad almost immediately after he had thus signally triumphed in his deed of guilt, so that I had no opportunity of meeting him.

‘ Years flew by, and the pinions of time were sorely encumbered by my grief; nevertheless, he seemed to move with a rapidity that almost stunned me, as I looked back upon his flight, mocking my vengeance, and every year leaving me still more determined to seal it in the blood of the oppressor. This man at length returned, and with a wife. He had married, for her money, an ugly but wealthy widow, who despised him as heartily as he

hated her. I dogged him like his shadow. I now perceived, with a satisfaction which was a positive balm to my stricken heart, that revenge was nigh to be accomplished. I was, relatively, a happy man. The excitement of my passions was the temporary delirium of intoxication, in which there is high physical enjoyment to the wretched beings who seek it, and shrink before the re-action by which it is followed with a positive perception of misery. The object of my sanguinary vengeance was near me, and I was satisfied. I haunted him like the unquiet spirit of one doomed to torment him for his guilt; but the opportunity so long sought for did not quickly come. I made myself acquainted with all his movements; and at length the fatal moment arrived.

‘ I had allied myself with a desperate man, a gambler and sharper like myself, but a fellow of pitiful soul, with whom I associated because he was a pliant villain, who shrank from no dirty occupation so long as anything was to be gained by it. We reciprocated no kindly feelings, but we knew each other, and he had found his alliance with me hitherto an advantage. The advantage indeed was mutual; yet I despised even while I was confederated with this rotten shred of humanity.

‘ The man upon whose death I had determined,

had retired to a lodging at Blackheath. There I and my companion took up our temporary abode. I did not communicate to this miserable associate my intentions, but pretended that I meditated a robbery upon a person whom I knew to be rich, and who generally carried a large sum of money about his person. To him it was a matter of perfect indifference in what he engaged, so long as it held out a prospect of good remuneration. My victim I discovered had gone as far as Chatham, and was expected home the same evening. I now felt that the hour for which I had endured a wretched existence for so many years was at length arrived. My companion and myself stationed ourselves about the middle of Shooter's Hill,—he, prepared to commit a robbery, and I, a murder. The night was fine. The moon was nearly at the full, and its beams were cast with a clear, but sober gray light upon the surrounding landscape. We stood within the shadow of the high hedge on either side, and were thus concealed from remote observation. I awaited the approach of my victim with intense anxiety. It was a moment of agonizing suspense; but I kept down my passionate feelings, with a convulsive energy of resolution, that almost seemed as if it would burst my bosom.

‘ My suspense was at length ended by the appearance of the villain, whose life I sought with an

hated her. I dogged him like his shadow. I now perceived, with a satisfaction which was a positive balm to my stricken heart, that revenge was nigh to be accomplished. I was, relatively, a happy man. The excitement of my passions was the temporary delirium of intoxication, in which there is high physical enjoyment to the wretched beings who seek it, and shrink before the re-action by which it is followed with a positive perception of misery. The object of my sanguinary vengeance was near me, and I was satisfied. I haunted him like the unquiet spirit of one doomed to torment him for his guilt; but the opportunity so long sought for did not quickly come. I made myself acquainted with all his movements; and at length the fatal moment arrived.

‘ I had allied myself with a desperate man, a gambler and sharper like myself, but a fellow of pitiful soul, with whom I associated because he was a pliant villain, who shrank from no dirty occupation so long as anything was to be gained by it. We reciprocated no kindly feelings, but we knew each other, and he had found his alliance with me hitherto an advantage. The advantage indeed was mutual; yet I despised even while I was confederated with this rotten shred of humanity.

‘ The man upon whose death I had determined,

had retired to a lodging at Blackheath. There I and my companion took up our temporary abode. I did not communicate to this miserable associate my intentions, but pretended that I meditated a robbery upon a person whom I knew to be rich, and who generally carried a large sum of money about his person. To him it was a matter of perfect indifference in what he engaged, so long as it held out a prospect of good remuneration. My victim I discovered had gone as far as Chatham, and was expected home the same evening. I now felt that the hour for which I had endured a wretched existence for so many years was at length arrived. My companion and myself stationed ourselves about the middle of Shooter's Hill,—he, prepared to commit a robbery, and I, a murder. The night was fine. The moon was nearly at the full, and its beams were cast with a clear, but sober gray light upon the surrounding landscape. We stood within the shadow of the high hedge on either side, and were thus concealed from remote observation. I awaited the approach of my victim with intense anxiety. It was a moment of agonizing suspense; but I kept down my passionate feelings, with a convulsive energy of resolution, that almost seemed as if it would burst my bosom.

‘ My suspense was at length ended by the appearance of the villain, whose life I sought with an

unremitting activity of purpose which years had not subdued or abated. He rode slowly up the hill, towards the spot where we stood awaiting him. He was carelessly whistling an old ballad tune, not apparently to banish thought, but to fill up the vacuities which thought should have supplied. The moon fell upon his harsh repulsive countenance, when he was within a few yards of the spot where we were standing, and exhibiting to my view those hated lineaments, added a stimulus to my stern but solemn revenge. I felt the deed I was about to do, a holy obligation.

‘The man was now within three yards of me. I rushed forward, and seizing the reins of his horse, bade him dismount. He stuck his spurs into the animal’s sides; but I held him with too tight a hand to render his escape a matter of such easy accomplishment. His horse, fretted by so severe an application of the spur, flung out its heels with such violence, that its rider was fairly thrown over its head. My companion immediately grasped the prostrate man by the collar. Seeing that he was within my power, I relinquished the reins of his steed; the animal bounded forward, and was soon out of sight. I now approached my victim, who was by this time on his legs, and taking two loaded pistols from my pocket, put one into his hand, and said,

“Villain, do you not know me?”

“No,” he replied, with a blanched cheek and quivering lip.

“Then I will bring to your recollection one whose whole life you have rendered a continued potion of gall and wormwood. Do you remember Lucy?”

He stood mute and trembling before me. “Now,” said I, “you shall expiate that crime with your heart’s blood; but I will not rob you of life like a cowardly assassin, who can take that life which he fears himself to lose. You are armed; so am I. We stand within three yards of each other. At a given signal we shall instantly fire.” I had scarcely uttered these words, than he cocked his pistol, presented it with desperate celerity, and pulled the trigger: it missed fire. I lost not a moment, but shot him through the head. He fell, without a groan. My companion immediately searched him, and having secured his money, we retreated from this scene of blood, and came to London.

“You know the rest. I have been tried for highway robbery and murder; my condemnation has followed, and I acknowledge that I deserve to die, though I am not that criminal which the world imagines me to be. What I have related to you would have gone with me to the grave, had you not won my gratitude by kindness, which I never

before experienced, and which I did not conceive to be an inheritance of the human bosom. I do not repent the deed, committed in satisfaction of a warrantable revenge, but feel that I have only been the minister of Almighty justice, in punishing the iniquity of a monster.'

'Nay,' said I, 'imagine not that God, though he frequently works by human agencies, can tolerate an act which is a direct violation of his own law. You admit that you deserve to die,—and could you come to such a stern conclusion against yourself, if you had really performed an act of retributive justice under a Divine sanction? Human judgments presuppose the divine; for man would never dare condemn what God approved. He would not suffer you to be punished for a deed which he either sanctioned or suggested. No; you have violated one of his most solemn prohibitions; and all you can now do, in order to render your Redeemer's atonement effectual in wiping out this foul stain of crime, is to strive earnestly to make your peace with him, before death at once cuts you off from all hope, and from all endeavour.

'You are right,' he said, submissively. 'I feel a load removed from my bosom, since I have unburdened my sorrows before you. I have room now for other reflections, and other feelings. *I have* thought little of futurity, because I little

heeded it. I entertain no fear of death, but court it rather as a refuge from mental anguish, though I have no security of a happy immortality; still any change will be to me a boon. My sufferings can scarcely be greater than they have been.'

'But it is now time you should look forward to their ceasing, and prepare yourself to enter upon that new state where alone true joys are to be found, and to pass the short remnant of your life in that earnest devotion of mind and heart, which shall give you the only chance of securing them.'

'What would you have me do?' said he, anxiously.

'First fall upon your knees and pray. Appear before your God with a broken spirit, and offer upon his altar the sacrifice of a contrite heart.'

He threw himself upon his knees. I knelt by him, and we mutually prayed. When he arose from his posture of fervent supplication, he confessed that he felt a relief from the depression which had weighed upon his soul, though it had failed to subdue it.

'It is strange,' he said, with quiet earnestness, 'but when I retrace the dark scenes of the past, though I can see little that has not the hue of guilt deeply and foully pervading it, still the bright beams of hope radiate through the gloom, and seem as a beacon light to the goal which is now immediately before me.'

‘If your confidence implies a justification of crime, it is not a holy reliance on the Divine mercy, but a presumptuous dependence upon a divine attribute. It is to convert that attribute into a weakness, which cannot belong to God, in whom all perfections are combined. You must remember that his condition of forgiveness is not a bare reliance upon his mercy. You can have no valid hope but through faith in the Redeemer of mankind, and that faith, during the brief remnant of your existence, must be confirmed by a full repentance, and the entire devotion of a penitent heart to God.’

He admitted the justice of what I said, and expressed a wish that I would administer to him the sacrament on the following day. Accordingly, the next morning he partook of this solemn rite with fervent Christian devotion.

From this hour he was an altered man: he prayed earnestly, and read the Bible with evident feelings of devotion. After this time, I never saw him any thing but calm and collected. I was with him every day, and was more and more astonished at the good which I beheld in him, as his character unfolded itself. He had now no disguise, but stood before me as a being who, during his life, had given the rein to vehement passions, thus permitting them to bear him onward uncontrouled; and they had cast a crust round his heart, through

which the seeds of good had hitherto been unable to penetrate: that crust once removed, they began to germinate and to fructify, and I trust finally 'brought forth fruit meet for repentance.'

That there was in him a natural sensibility, amounting even to deep tenderness, was clear from the brief narrative of his life, and it was confirmed to me in every sentiment he expressed. He had ceased altogether to justify the murder for which he stood condemned, and I believe sincerely regretted that he had, without a warning, sent so great a sinner to his account. Though his contrition was fervid, there was no unmanly repining. He acquiesced in the decision of the laws, and prepared to meet death with a manly, but not presumptuous, fortitude.

The day before his execution was to take place, he was told that his companion in guilt had committed suicide. He received the information with an expression of severe indignation.

'There is no palliation but madness,' said he, 'for the crime of suicide. The man who deliberately destroys himself proves that he fears to meet death like a Christian. He proves himself to be in the "gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity." He dies at enmity with his God. He quits the world without hope, and leaves no blessing behind him.

I trust I shall, at least, show how a Christian can die, though a sinner.'

I attended him to the last moment of his life, and was with him upon the drop. He had received the sacrament on that fatal morning, and spent several hours in prayer. He had prepared himself for the final pang before he quitted his cell; when he appeared, therefore, before the sheriff, and his irons were knocked off, he evinced no apprehension. He did not now pray, but walked firmly to the platform, where he stood calmly, under the instrument of death. I took his hand in mine, just before the bolt of the drop was withdrawn; he returned the pressure. There was no tremor that betrayed the least fear at this awful moment. I besought God's blessing for the sinner, and quitted the platform; it immediately fell, and he died almost without a struggle. I shall never forget this scene to the latest moment of my existence.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. B.—HIS SUFFERINGS.—HANNAH THE HOUSEKEEPER.—

MR. B.'S CONFIDENCE.—MY VISITS.—MR. B.'S SENTI-
MENTS.—THE APOTHECARY—HIS PRACTICE.—THERA-
PEUTICS.

AMONG the persons with whom my professional duties made me acquainted, was a Mr. B——, a person of independent fortune, but who had proved, by sad experience, that to be rich in worldly possessions, and to be poor in health, mars the enjoyment of both. He was a man of middle age, but so great a sufferer, that his life was one long lingering course of torment to him; yet he bore it with the patience of a Christian, and the firmness of a philosopher. He was a batchelor, and without a kinsman in the world, to soothe his sorrows, and assuage his agonies. Although a person of extreme sensibility, he possessed such perfect command over his emotions, that, like the last struggles of drowning men, they never rose to the surface; and his imperturbability of expression was commonly mistaken for an insensible temperament. He had been originally in the navy, and upon one occasion, in boarding an enemy's ship, had received a severe cut across the cheek, which, for fourteen years, had

rendered his existence all but intolerable. It had produced some affection of the nerves of the head on that side, which caused him incessant torment. Nothing had hitherto mitigated it for a moment, and he had long given up all hope of relief.

When I first knew him, he was a man withered in the very prime of life, and bearing about him the sad marks of premature decay. He shunned all intercourse with the world, and dwelt alone, seeking no sympathy for his sufferings, and bowing meekly to the will of Heaven. His only companion was a large Newfoundland dog, which would frequently, when it saw his countenance express unusual agony, place its huge paws upon his knees, and lick the gash in his cheek, as if sensible that there was the root of all he endured. I never should have known him had he not sought my acquaintance, for the sake of administering to him the consolations of religion; I had, therefore, opportunities of witnessing what, probably, no other person ever did witness, not even his servants. In a short time after my first interview with him, he made me the depository of his thoughts and feelings.

He was altogether a remarkable man. His powers of endurance were amazing. I have known him bite his tongue quite through, during the intensity of his torment, without being conscious of

it; his countenance the while so calm as to exhibit no trace of the pangs within, except by a transient suffusion of colour; yet neither a sigh nor murmur escaped his lips. He was, in the common acceptation of the term, a religious man. His studies had been chiefly confined to divinity, of which he was extremely fond, and to which he was naturally led by the severe visitation he was enduring. He made no pretence to scholarship, having been sent to sea early in life, where he, of course, learned little but what was calculated to advance him in his profession. He had an old servant, the only being in the world, save his dog, for whom he expressed any attachment. She had nursed him, and, as he had been very delicate in his infancy, he attributed to her care his subsequent change from a rickety babe, to an active and robust youth. She was the only attendant whom he ever allowed to enter his presence, and in her he tolerated what, in the judgment of many, would have passed for the grossest indecorum. She would frequently attempt to persuade him, in a manner so harsh as to rouse my silent indignation, that he was not so ill as he fancied; bidding him rouse himself, and not mope like a love-sick girl. He would only smile at her expostulations.

One day, after she had removed the things from his breakfast-table, for he never took his first daily

meal until noon, he said to me, while a faint smile passed over his sharp contracted features,

‘That is really a faithful creature, though she does somewhat presume upon long familiarity,—the license of years, and of her fidelity,—to express her thoughts somewhat roughly.’

‘I should fear,’ said I, ‘that there is less of feeling than might be in such rude expostulations. There is no doubt frequently much in old and faithful servants that we may be disposed to put up with, but I could never endure positive rudeness.’

‘That, my dear sir,’ he replied, with more of warmth than I had ever before observed, ‘is the most excellent woman living. She has been more than a mother to me. She bore with me, caressed and loved me, when I was a misshapen and morose infant; and should I not requite her in my manhood? Her heart yearns towards me with feelings of earnest interest; her very roughness, therefore, associated as it is with those feelings, has to me more of nature’s music in it, than the song of the bird that soars up to heaven’s gate with its notes of gladness. Its song is the mere impulse of an unvarying and irresistible instinct; the reproaches of old Hannah are the warm expostulations of a kind and sympathetic heart.’

I could not exactly concur with his views; for I had often heard Hannah make observations which

must have pained him, yet he never rebuked her; and even his noble companion, that had its constant place upon the rug beside him, appeared to me sometimes to turn its eyes from him to her, with a dissatisfied expression, that seemed to convey a stern rebuke, though she either did not or would not understand it.

I never visited this excellent man that I did not receive a lesson of Christian resignation, for which, I believe steadfastly, that I was ever after the better. Scarcely a day passed without my seeing him, for he always expressed the greatest satisfaction at my presence. I had often perceived there was something, independent of his bodily suffering, which, at times, suspended a cloud over his spirits, but I had never presumed to intrude into the sacred privacy of his thoughts. What he communicated he communicated freely; it was evident to me that I possessed his confidence, and, in truth, I felt flattered by it. He has often assured me that he was never, for one instant, free from intense anguish of body; and when I remarked upon his extraordinary powers of endurance, and the meek patience with which he submitted to the divine infliction, he replied, ‘I am conscious that I deserve it, and that renders me able to bear it. Were it ten times heavier, I should feel that it amounts not to a fraction of the severity which Heaven’s justice

might inflict; neither does it come up to the magnitude of my deservings.'

'But, my dear sir, I must say, that great as is your Christian humility, your fortitude under suffering is greater, and I honour you for it from the very depth of my heart.'

'Ah!' he replied, and a slight flush overspread his cheek, 'am I not shamed every day by the heathen? What do you say to men who subject themselves to a life of torture, as exquisite as it is lasting, merely in accordance with the delusion of a revolting superstition?—and shall my submission to a divine infliction, which I can neither obviate nor remit, deserve the praise of fortitude? Had I the option, I candidly tell you, I should avoid the daily agony I endure, and bless God for my deliverance. When, therefore, I see men, enthusiasts if you will, who might, at any moment of their lives, evade the horrible penalties which they court, but who endure, without flinching, through a long succession of years, what is my feeble submission? I have often wondered at the patience with which the Indian devotee lives, under torments which I could scarcely imagine our physical nature capable of supporting, not only without a murmur, but with a perpetual emotion of triumph. Believe me, sir, I am every way a weak vessel. You magnify my submission into an act of merit, and I possess none but through

Him who alone can confer upon human actions that reward which is the gratuitous dispensation of divine mercy, not the independent acquisition of human endeavours.'

In none of our conversations would he ever admit that he suffered like a patient Christian, and yet never did I visit him without witnessing proofs of fortitude, under pangs perfectly appalling, which have caused me to shrink into myself with conscious inferiority. I have seen every muscle of his countenance quivering, and the whole surface of a deep glowing crimson, his eye blood-shot, and his lips of a pale ashy hue; yet would he continue to discourse with calmness, and the only visible intimation he gave of agony was, every now and then, a momentary pause, made as if a sudden pang had, for an instant, suspended all his powers; after which he would resume the conversation, with perfect placidity of feature, and quiet earnestness of tone. I have seen his very fingers turn purple, as if the whole mass of his blood were suddenly brought to the surface, stagnated and changed in hue, by the intensity of his torment; yet he did not complain. He considered complaint criminal; and even when the perspiration has started from his skin, which has been occasionally tinged with blood, so admirably had he disciplined his mind to endurance, that I have never been able to detect a murmur.

He was visited regularly once a week by an apothecary in the neighbourhood, who had attended him professionally for years, and obtained from him nearly a net income of a hundred and fifty pounds per annum. This gentleman sent regularly, at nine o'clock every morning, four rose-coloured draughts, in small taper bottles, the corks of which were covered with pink paper, tied with a short length of crimson string. For every one of these beautifully tinted therapeutics, neatly packed in each matutinal parcel, he never forgot to charge, in his quarterly bill, the moderate sum of one shilling and ninepence; making the exact amount of seven shillings per diem. Occasionally he would add a fifth draught of a different colour, which was invariably packed separate from the rest, the bottle being always crowned, above the cork, with a tiny box of sky-blue pasteboard, containing a nauseous, but, as the apothecary declared, infallible remedy, in the shape of two pills, which always turned out to be very bitter pills, but no doubt efficacious in proportion to their bitterness. For ten years he had prescribed these admirable curatives, but they produced no more impression upon his patient's disease than snow upon water.

The first time I saw this worthy Esculapian, I was much amused by the professional sagacity which he thought it necessary to display, in order,

no doubt, to show that such a man could not recommend the infliction of four nasty draughts per diem, without a reasonable expectation of their doing good in some way or other ; and certain it is, that if they did not benefit the patient, they, at all events, benefited the apothecary ; and so my poor friend took them for charity's sake.

This medical man was a tall, thin personage, with a sharp acrid countenance, and a quick calculating eye, which seemed to tell you that he knew how to turn his drugs to the best account. He was a noisy talker, an energetic politician, but a far greater oracle in political than in medical economy. Still he had a name and an extensive connexion, and that was every thing. He was an active, hardy, busy, wiry man, that could knock up a horse without knocking up himself, and continued to make an honest forty-five hundred a year by the sale of drugs and advice together, in neat compounds,—which sundry of his patients seemed to take for the very honour of the thing,—at the moderate profit, to the medical gentleman, of fifteen hundred per cent. This enabled him to keep two carriages, and live in a square.

Upon entering the chamber of Mr. B——, his invariable practice was to seize him by the wrists, as a fisherman would grasp the gills of a live salmon, then jerk out of his fob a large gold stop-watch,

and, having fixed his eyes, with grave professional sagacity, upon the well-described index, say, with an extremely significant nod of the head,—‘The pulse improves,—there is much less irritation,—the favourable effects of the draughts,—you can’t do better than continue them. Good morning.’

I was astonished to see how easy my friend bore this direct invasion of his funds, without a single word of expostulation. But his idea was, that the members of all professions must live; and as physic was the commodity upon which apothecaries got their bread, it was natural that they should try to dispose of it to the best advantage. This appeared to me a weakness; but not conceiving that I had any business to interfere with these social habits, I never ventured to say anything on the subject, knowing that it would not have altered his determination to proceed in what he called the good old way. He hated changes, but once confessed to me, that he never took the draughts so confidently prescribed, as they always aggravated his pains; yet it was a pleasure to him to observe that the bottles were a delight to old Hannah, to whom they became a natural perquisite, which she claimed as a matter of prescriptive right.

I must confess I could not see much to commend, in his allowing himself to be charged so heavily for a weekly visit, from a man who, according to

his own confession, rather aggravated than mitigated the pains to which he was a perpetual martyr; and my indignation rose as often as I saw this "respectable practitioner," for such was he designated in the neighbourhood, make his hebdomadal visit, feel his patient's pulse, pronounce him improving, and recommend a continuance of the draughts which had been intended to put, daily, half a pint of very odious stuff into Mr. B——'s stomach, and had actually put seven shillings a day into his own pocket for the last ten years.

CHAPTER X.

MR. B. BECOMES DANGEROUSLY ILL—RECEIVES THE SACRAMENT.—LOVE OF LIFE—INDICATED AS NATURAL TO MAN—QUESTIONED AS TO ITS CONSISTENCY WITH CHRISTIAN HOPES.—MR. B.'S RECOVERY.—HANNAH DETECTED—HER DISMISSAL.—MR. B.'S DETERMINATION TO GO ABROAD.—THE APOTHECARY SURPRISED.—MR. B. DEPARTS FOR SWITZERLAND—HIS FINAL RESTORATION AND MARRIAGE.

THE more I saw of this suffering man, the more strongly was his meek and Christian character developed. He was pleased with my friendship, and I profited by my intercourse with him. So beautiful an example as he exhibited of Christian resignation, under inflictions the most trying and difficult to be borne, was, to me, a perpetual lesson of practical religion. Serious as he was, and with the idea of death almost ever in his thoughts, his conversation was free from the wildness of enthusiasm, and from the gloom of an unhealthy state of mind. His religion was never morose, but elevated, exempt alike from severity both in speculation and practice.

About this time he was attacked with a severe fit of illness, which confined him to his bed, and his life was despaired of. He wasted to a shadow, and, when the paroxysm of his disorder had subsided, it was feared that the prostration of the vital

powers was so great as to preclude all chance of his surviving. A physician was called in, who pronounced his death inevitable. Since the commencement of this attack, the pains by which he had been so long and so constantly tormented, entirely ceased. For five weeks he had been altogether free from suffering, except that peculiar to the disorder of which he was now likely to become the victim.

At his request, I called one evening, and administered to him the holy sacrament. He was so weak that he could scarcely lift his head from his pillow, yet he expressed an earnest anxiety to recover, for which I could not account. His sudden relief from suffering endeared to him that existence which had been, for years, an intolerable burden. 'If it please God to take me,' he said, 'I am prepared to go; but I confess I long to live. My illness has given me a perception of enjoyment which few can feel, and none but those who have been suddenly released from agonies such as mine. A new world seems opened before me, the joys of which I can now fully appreciate. Its blessings are tangible. The scene at this moment, over which the sunshine of pure fruition appears to glow, is obvious to my bodily eye, and I feel as if I could live a blessed being. After all, the gloom of the grave casts a solemn shade of deep apprehension upon my heart. I doubt not

that I shall be removed to a better state; but that state is uncertain, while I have an inward assurance that, being released from bodily suffering, there is a state of positive enjoyment before me, should it please God to spare me yet a few years. I am still young. A man of five and thirty cannot have done much good in the world; at all events I am sensible that I could do much more than I have done.'

'But, my dear sir,' said I, 'you will find that you have greatly miscalculated the value of human happiness, if you imagine that it will necessarily ensue upon the absence of physical suffering. Its seat is in the soul, not in the body; and it by no means therefore follows, because pain has been banished from the one, that peace will visit the other. Your pains may be succeeded by the revival of passions which those pains had stifled. Temptation may triumph where it is no longer baffled by the rigid discipline of physical agony. The body, invigorated by renewed health, and again alive to the gratification of sense, may let in upon the soul a flood of pollution, from which it has been kept free by pangs, that, like the dragon-guards of the golden fruit of the Hesperides, preserved it intact from the external agency of carnal defilement.'

'But I trust the severe probation of years would not have come upon me in vain. I feel that I have learned to appreciate the Divine blessings; and

that, in the school of affliction, in which I have been so long taught, the wisdom I have acquired is "that wisdom which is from above, full of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." If my trial has been a vain one, it were indeed better that I should die, while my spirit is under the favourable influence of the long and bitter test by which, I trust, it has been prepared for the inheritance of the good; but it does appear to me, that I could still, in a life of quiet enjoyment, show how grateful my heart is for the boon of renewed existence, apart from that affliction by which it has been hitherto estranged from enjoyment.

'To me there appears nothing in this world so desirable as a quiet preparation for death. He who has no terrors of the future, when the last summons arrives, is indeed an enviable man; and where the soul has no apprehension of futurity, but can confidently anticipate that bliss which it promises to the righteous for evermore, the lingering desire of existence seems a mistaken wish; for surely the confidence of life in perpetuity, ought to countervail the mere contingent expectation of temporal enjoyment.'

'True; but reason and nature are frequently two antagonist elements of our being, and our feelings do not always ratify what our minds admit to be true. There is in us a natural clinging to life,

which no force of reason can repel, and even the fairest promises of futurity cannot repress, that marks how feeble we are in pursuit of that immortal crown, which is the grand aim of every Christian's life, and the possession of which he shuns only because the earthly diadem, seen with all its flawed gems and faded wreaths, is brighter to the eye of flesh than that which is not seen.'

'Your argument will surely not apply, where there is a positive and absorbing affiance in Him, who has prepared the immortal crown as a reward for those fitting themselves by a due course of spiritual discipline here, to wear it in the life hereafter. Life is no further a blessing, than as it is successfully employed to prepare the soul for a condition after death, that shall no longer be measured by the divisions of time, but continue throughout all duration. When, therefore, the great object of our being is accomplished, and we are properly prepared for that eternal change which is the common lot of humanity, it appears to me that death is a boon.'

'It is so in the abstract; but the weakness of our nature neutralizes the boon, and too frequently renders it a terror.'

I confess I felt some surprise to find that the love of life was so strong in a man who had, for so many years, been such a constant and intense

sufferer. The pause from pain had, it appeared, given him a new perception of enjoyment, and he was loth to quit a world which had ceased to have any charms for him until the remission of bodily torment, endured for such a long term of years, gave fresh stimulus to hope, and opened before his view a new world in time, of which he was desirous of obtaining the experience before he entered upon a world eternal.

From this moment he rallied, and his physician ordered change of air. At his especial request, I accompanied him to Hastings, where, in the course of a few weeks, he was restored to his usual health. But the return of health, which, indeed, was but comparative, brought with it his old torment. This was a severe disappointment to his expectations. All his new-raised hopes vanished, and he became, once more, the resigned, uncomplaining martyr. There was no expressed repining heard to escape his lips. He returned to his home in London, and to the ruder tenderness of Hannah, who nursed him, as he said, with a rough but affectionate hand, though, in my judgment, she had a more immediate regard for the fruits of office than for either the interest or the comfort of her master; and presumed upon a long servitude, to take not only liberties with his purse, but advantage of his forbearance.

I had at length an opportunity of convincing Mr. B——, that my suspicions of his confidential domestic were but too well-founded ; and by a close investigation, through my agency and intervention, he finally discovered that, for years, she had been in the habit of defrauding him in every possible way. Upon this discovery, painful as was the sacrifice, he immediately discharged her, though he settled upon her, for life, the amount of her wages, which was twenty pounds a year ;—to my thinking a very unwise act, as it was giving a premium for dishonesty. I could not, however, move him from his purpose, which was one of conscientious benevolence. He acted upon the Christian maxim, of rewarding evil with good, forgetting that the spirit of the precept is diametrically opposed to any encouragement of evil likely to injure the best interests of society ; and, therefore, where we repay evil with good, it behoves us to take care that we do not encourage a mischief, only because we are too gentle-natured, or too passive to use the necessary exertion to stifle it.

After old Hannah's departure, the nervous invalid could reconcile himself to the presence of no other domestic. The dismissal of his venerable nurse rendered him so uncomfortable that he determined to change the scene. He had too high a sense of moral obligation to take her back to his service,

after having discovered that she had been guilty of positive acts of fraud; but he had found her so useful, and been accustomed to her presence for so many years, that her absence made quite a chasm in his domestic economy.

He said to me one evening, 'My kind friend, we shall soon part: I have determined to go abroad. This I was advised to do many years ago, but I disregarded the advice, because the idea of quitting my native land was painful to me. That repugnance no longer exists; and I propose starting for Switzerland next week.'

This sudden resolution somewhat surprised me, but I nevertheless thought he had come to a wise determination, as change of climate and of scene might have the effect of relieving his grievous malady. I happened to be present when Mr. B—— announced his determination to the apothecary.

'Impossible, my dear sir,' said the latter, 'you never can be so mad as to go to such a shocking climate as Switzerland?'

'What climate should you recommend?'

'I am satisfied, and will stake my professional reputation upon it, that there is no climate so well suited to your singular constitution as your own. Besides, you have, sir, a remarkable idiocratical peculiarity; it is, therefore, necessary you should have by you a medical adviser who understands

the unusual properties of your physical temperament, and can watch the vicissitudes of your complaint, which, believe me, is a difficult one to deal with.'

'I have made arrangements to go to Switzerland, and shall depart next week.'

The apothecary was thunderstruck; he tried to dissuade Mr. B—— from what he declared the rashest determination possible, but it was of no avail.

'I am not comfortable here,' said the invalid, languidly. 'My disorder does not abate; I am, therefore, resolved to quit this country; a physician of high repute has given me the advice: I think it salutary, and shall, therefore, follow it.'

'But,' said the apothecary, interrupting him, 'he cannot be acquainted with your constitution.'

'I have great confidence in his advice nevertheless, and intend to take it.'

'Then, my word for it, you will only go to Switzerland to die.'

So saying, the medical gentleman took up his hat with considerable perturbation, bowed hurriedly, as he quitted the room, mounted his one-horse chaise, and drove rapidly from the door.

The following week Mr. B—— departed for Switzerland. He occasionally corresponded with me, and, after an absence of two years, I was gra-

tified by learning that change of climate had been of so much service to him, that his complaint had considerably abated. About a year after this, I received a long letter from him, which concluded in the following words:—‘New hopes, my dear friend, and new prospects have now opened before me. I have an interest in this world, which has never been mine until now. You will be surprised to hear that the comparative renovation of my health has encouraged me to change my condition of sad singleness, for, I trust, a better. I am married. I know I shall receive your warm congratulations.’ When last I heard from him, his health had continued to mend, and he was the happy father of two children.

CHAPTER XI.

A GAMBLER WOUNDED IN A DUEL.—HIS MISERABLE STATE OF MIND.—NOT TO BE CONSOLED.—HIS CHANGE FOR THE WORSE.—DREAD OF DEATH.—DESPAIR.—BLASPHEMY.—I ATTEMPT PERSUASION—IT FAILS.—HIS DISTRACTION.—LAST MOMENTS.—DEATH.

I WAS one evening requested to visit an unfortunate man, who had been shot in a duel, and of whose recovery there was little or no hope. I accordingly repaired to rather a mean house in — street, Soho, and upon inquiring for the party, whom I had been requested to see, was shown into an attic, where lay the unhappy man, upon a small tent-bed, without curtains, every thing in the apartment denoting the most homely accommodation. Upon inquiry, I found that, on the previous night, the unfortunate person now before me had been engaged in a dispute with some sharper at a gambling-house,—that they had, in consequence, met the following morning, according to what are called the laws of honour, and that one of the parties had been shot through the body.

When I entered his chamber, the wounded man looked up into my face with such an expression of intense anxiety, as in a moment satisfied me that he

was in no enviable state of mind. I seated myself by his bed-side, and took his hand: it trembled; there was a clammy moisture on the skin, which I had frequently before felt, and could not mistake.

‘This is an unhappy business,’ said I.

‘Yes, yes,’ he replied hurriedly, ‘I rashly exposed my life. Oh! and so unfit to die.’

He raised himself upon his pillow, and said in a loud whisper,

‘Console me, my dear sir, I need consolation; mine is a fearful trial.’

‘Compose yourself; excitement will only aggravate your sufferings, both mental and bodily, and you will require much self-possession.’

‘Indeed,’ he cried, interrupting me, ‘I feel that I require what I shall not be able to command; my thoughts are a torture to me.’

‘Why?’

‘Alas! because I have been a wretch; not a ray of virtue beams on the desert track of my life, to break the horrible stagnation of guilt, which has settled like a noxious exhalation upon it.’

‘But perhaps your judgment is the result rather of the reaction of terror upon a reckless mind, suddenly brought to reflection, than of calm and deliberate conviction. Can you find no consolation in “turning to that strong hold” in the sad hour of trial, where “the prisoners of hope” look for the

only peace which can reach the soul, and prepare it for the paradise of God?’

He shuddered. ‘I am not “a prisoner of hope,” but of despair. I have no “strong hold” to turn unto. I have lived an infidel, and how can I die a believer?’

‘If that be the case, you may try your last chance: the eleventh hour is arrived; accept the hire, enter into the vineyard, and perform the one hour’s service.’

‘It would be the most foul hypocrisy: I cannot serve Him in whom I have never trusted; I cannot do His work in whom I have never believed. I know not what to think;—the awful uncertainty into which I am about to plunge, paralyses every higher impulse of my soul.’

‘Does not the state of feeling which you now express, satisfy you, at least, that what you have disbelieved may be true?—and is it not the conviction of this truth that now so sorely saddens your departing hour? Can you not seek your Redeemer as a refuge? He has promised much to the penitent; but without penitence there can be no pardon. Does not this appear your wisest course, since the contrary brings upon your mind a flood of vague and indefinable horrors, which, however, are as positively horrors as if they were based upon the most indubitable evidence.’

‘But I cannot bend my stubborn heart to the sacrifice. The rebel will not yield. It is corrupt to the very core. The seal of despair is upon it, and hope has, therefore, utterly abandoned so polluted a sanctuary. I have lived an unbeliever, and feel I shall die despairing.’

I remained with him for several hours, but could produce no favourable impression. He sought consolation where it was not to be found. Sin had imparted such a repelling quality to his soul, that religion could not effect an entrance. I visited him every day, and found that, in proportion as his end approached, his horror of dying increased, yet his trust in a divine sustentation in the hour of extremity, if possible, diminished. Feeling no assurance, no peace, he spoke of the Deity, not only without reverence, but often with a bitterness that denoted a terror of Him, which could not be entertained, save with feelings of positive enmity.

On the sixth day, the wounded man presented me with a small packet, which he said contained the strange incidents of his life, but begged that I would not break the seal until his miseries were terminated in the grave; ‘where,’ said he, with a heavy sigh, ‘I trust to lie down in everlasting unconsciousness; but the awful “perhaps,” that often comes before this trust, blackens the prospect, and if there be a hell, gives me a positive foretaste of it.’

From this time he rapidly changed for the worse, and I soon perceived that his last hour was at hand. He was a constant prey to those appalling reflections which dart their thousand stings into the disturbed conscience of an infidel, on the eve of his departure to that fearful reckoning, which, to the best among us is a source of apprehension, and to most an object of dread. He daily declined, and the fierce exacerbations of his despair were extreme. He could find no consolation in the suggestions of religion, because having always rejected and denied his God, that God, in his extremity, denied and rejected him. Such is the invariable issue of infidelity. He could not pray; for the moment his lips uttered the words of either supplication, or of contrition, they recoiled upon his conscience, with the shock of a moral earthquake, exposing to his keen scrutiny the nakedness of his heart, into which no sublime emotion, either towards the Creator or the creature, had ever entered. All within was blight and desolation,—a canker-worm was at the core.

Perceiving that reflection only filled his mind with disquieting apprehensions, he endeavoured to stifle it, but in vain. It poured, like the pestilential blast of the desert, upon his distempered soul, and quickened it with the seeds of terror. Finding that he had no resort from its influence, he roused his

morbid spirit to a fierce defiance, and with a sullen steadiness of purpose, finally refused to listen to me, when I attempted to pray by him, or read any portion of the Scriptures. At length I pressed him to receive the sacrament: he affected to receive my proposal with a smile of incredulous derision; but it was a smile, however, that betokened rather acerbity of heart, than composure of spirit.

The awful moment of departure at length arrived. I was summoned to his bed-side early in the morning. I proceeded, without delay, to witness a scene which I had for some time looked forward to with painful anticipation. The wretched man always received my visits kindly, though I could not prevail upon him to listen to the words of eternal life. He appreciated my attentions, but my exertions were lost upon him.

When I reached his chamber, I perceived a striking change. Pale and ghastly, he slowly rolled his eyes towards me, then fixed them with a moveless stare, upon the ceiling. The lids were galled and red, the orbs within them glassy and blood-shot, as if the night had passed in the most fearful physical struggles. The broad forehead was pursed up into large wrinkles, though his age could not much exceed forty, while the cheeks had sunk upon the bone, the skin hanging upon it on either side,

flacid and squalid, at once from suffering and neglect. For several minutes the dying man stirred not a muscle of his countenance, nor withdrew his eyes from the object upon which he had at first fixed them. His mouth was open, showing the brown tongue, which protruded from between the relaxed jaws, giving an expression almost hideous to his countenance. I took him by the hand,—the dews of death were upon it. I endeavoured to excite his attention by some words of comfort, though his soul could no longer be the recipient of comfort. My words, nevertheless, seemed to call him back to consciousness, for he turned his eyes upon me, and shuddered. Opening them to the full extent, a flash of dreadful conviction for a moment roused his torpid thoughts, and every feature was settled in a wild expression of horror. He absolutely shrieked under the excess of his mental agonies. A signal retribution had indeed suddenly overtaken him. He became sensible that the hour of his departure was at hand, and was aghast under the fearful persuasion.

‘I am dying,’ he said, at length, almost with a screech. ‘I am going to hell—to hell—but, no! why there? What can a man do in forty years to merit such a doom for eternity? And yet, I know not; there may be an everlasting retribution;—priests tell us so.’

I made an effort to abate his extreme excitement, but it was unavailing.

‘Go, go,’ he cried; ‘torment me not now:—the tortures of the damned cannot go beyond what I at this moment suffer. If this be a foretaste of futurity,—woe! woe! But why should I believe what I have ever denied? Leave me—let me die, if accursed, at least untroubled, save by my own thoughts.’

His horror increased to a pitch of intensity perfectly appalling, as his end drew near. In spite of the pertinacity with which he rejected all spiritual consolation, he could not still those whispers within, which told a fearful tale of blighted prospects and frightful apprehensions. He had at length become sensible that to die, was to be cut off at once from every enjoyment and from every hope. The lashings of his conscience were terrible. Remorse stung him to the soul, while his emaciated body writhed under the stern visitation. He had no pause from torment—no interval of peace;—the lava flood of that moral volcano which had at length broken out into fierce eruption within, poured its burning tide upon his desolate heart, which shrank, blasted, under the inscrutable agony!

At times, during the pauses of his fiercer paroxysms, he would lay sullen and malignant, blaspheming that God whom he could no longer hope

to propitiate, while the scalding exudations of despair trickled over his throbbing temples. His hair was matted with perspiration, which streamed from his forehead, and trickled into the deeply-worn furrows of his withered cheeks; and so visible and so intense were the inward agitations which convulsed his bosom, that the nurse, accustomed as she was to such scenes, wiped a tear from her eye, as she gazed upon the miserable sufferer. The nearer death approached the more acute were his internal struggles; and even in his very silence there was a something more dreadful than the tongue either dared or could avow.

Every now and then he gazed with strained and glowing eyeballs round his apartment, until his diseased imagination raised monstrous phantoms, which shrieked and gibbered before his distempered fancy, caressing him, and welcoming him to their infernal abodes. Upon the bright speculum of his memory, scenes of past guilt were reflected with vivid fidelity; and, overpowered by these frightful visitations, he sank, at length, into a state of morbid horror. His eyes were continually wandering, as if in pursuit of some sinister object, and he constantly shuddered, with strong convulsive emotion, at the spectres which his appalled imagination continued to conjure up.

I did every thing to alleviate the mental pangs,

which, like a night-mare, overlaid his departed soul, and besought him with earnestness to receive the last consolations of religion. In vain; he would not listen, but repelled me with an angry scowl.

‘Would you have me die a hypocrite?’ he cried, with an energy which almost made me start. ‘No, let it not be said that I lent myself to a mockery which I despise.’

‘But,’ said I, still loth to let him expire in such a state of spiritual bereavement, if but one spark of faith could be kindled in his soul—‘why should you think that a mockery which is the consolation of millions? Is it likely that the individual should be right in adopting a creed from which he derives no consolation, and that the million should be wrong in embracing a faith that imparts to them at least a relative happiness here, with the hopes of eternal and perfect happiness hereafter? Does not the utter uncertainty in which your principles of belief end, fairly lead to the inference, that they are unsound? They supply no grounds of confidence. In your mind all is uncertainty, and doubt, and gloom. On the other hand, the faith of the Christian believer brings him peace at the last. He has no misgivings. He feels certain of a blessed immortality, and dies with the conviction of being exalted to communion

with his God. Weigh then these two facts together, and see on which side the balance of advantage inclines.'

'It is too late now,' he replied, mournfully; 'my die is cast; and if there be a future retribution, I must be one of the doomed.'

He gasped—but when I besought him to pray, he answered with a vehement acerbity of tone and gesture,—

'Pray I cannot. I may mock the Omnipotent, but am unable to prostrate my stubborn spirit; the taint of guilt has pervaded too deeply. You have the written record of my past life, and you will there read, when these bones are mouldering under the sod, what a fruitless life mine has been—how stained with the dark hues of guilt.'

'But a prayer for mercy at Heaven's throne may not, even now, be fruitless.'

'From me, it would be worse than blasphemy. My lips may utter the accents of supplication; but the aspirations of my soul can never go up for a memorial to Heaven. I have no hope. I have lived without God in time, and must, therefore, live without him in eternity. What then have I to do with prayer?'

He again gasped for breath, and his whole frame became, for a moment, convulsed. There was a strange and almost supernatural glare in his eye,

which indicated in characters not to be misunderstood, the violence of his mental conflict. The rattles were already heard in his throat; a clammy dew suffused his forehead; his lips became blanched; and it was evident that his last hour was come. Death stood over him, like an enemy and avenger, frowning in the grim severity of his conquest. The wretched man quailed beneath the stroke, as if he had been smitten with the arm of a demon. He stared wildly around him. The phlegm bubbled faintly between his lips, and his teeth were set. The paroxysm subsided, and he rallied for a short interval.

‘What a moment!’ he exclaimed, shuddering; ‘how the fiends tear my polluted soul from the corrupt body, which it must so shortly quit! God, is there no mercy for me?’

‘Repentance may still come,’ said I, grasping his hand.

‘To me never—contrition is beyond my power. Do not mock me. Cheat me not with the illusions of hope; they must soon vanish into horrible realities. I may be sorry for the past, because of my alarms for the future; but repent I cannot. My stubborn soul is too stiffly clogged with the principles of corruption, to be melted down into a holy and available penitence.’

His breath now came from him in quick convulsive sobs; the phlegm rattled still more audibly in his throat, so as to render his articulation thick and indistinct.

‘If there were hope for me,’ he continued, ‘my heart would not now be on the rack of despair. The writhings of a distempered and condemned spirit clearly indicate my doom.’

‘The robber on the cross was pardoned,’ I observed, as he paused to breathe.

‘But I am more than a robber,’ he cried, with a fierce hysterical laugh; ‘for a long term of years I have been familiar only with crime. I am not—I cannot be fit for the purity of heaven, if there be such a place, for the eternal communion of saints. There’s a hell burning within me, which gives me a terrible earnest of what may be the condition of my futurity. My brain’s on fire—my heart is ice—the grasp of death is on me—the howling of the damned now bursts upon my startled ear. I hear their shrieks!—I hear their shrieks!—away—away—Satan will have his own. There! there! he comes! Raise me—save me—tear me from him! I am already in his grasp!—ah!—hah!—crush!—rescue—rescue me! Now he smothers—he strangles—he gripes me hard!—hard—hard!—I—I—I—’

Here his voice sank into an almost inaudible whisper, and he fell back, exhausted, upon his bed. His glazed and rayless eyes turned inward with an expression of paralysing horror. He struggled for breath,—it came not ;—his teeth gnashed ; he clenched his hands in agony ; and, with a strong convulsive shudder, expired ! I have never witnessed so awful a death.

CHAPTER XII.

I OPEN THE PACKET. — THE GAMBLER'S HISTORY. — HIS UNCLE. — PUT TO SCHOOL. — BEGINS TO PILFER. — LEAVES SCHOOL, AND BECOMES A SHARPER. — COMMITS FORGERY. — OBLIGED TO GO TO SEA. — HIS SEVERE TREATMENT. — KILLS HIS COMPANION. — QUILTS THE SHIP. — HIS DISTRESS.

ON the evening after the body of the unfortunate man was committed to the grave, I broke the seal of the packet which he had consigned to my trust, and read as follows:—

‘ From my very infancy, mine has been a life of trouble. At the tender age of two years, I was left an orphan, under the guardianship of an uncle, the most unfeeling and unamiable of men. He was one of those selfish beings who live but for themselves; and, as the charge of an infant soon became troublesome to him, he consigned me to the trust of a woman who had once been his house-keeper. This person reared me until I became of an age to go to school, when I was sent to a cheap seminary, where they received little money for teaching nothing; but my uncle was satisfied, so long as I was not in the way to molest him. Being naturally quick, I soon acquired all that was taught at this

preliminary academy ; and it was here that I began to practise those arts which have been the very bane of my after existence.

‘ It was customary to allow each boy a small sum every week, for pocket-money ; but this indulgence my uncle denied to me ; nor did he ever give me a single sixpence when I returned to school after the several vacations. This privation first tempted me into the path of error. Finding that I was the only boy in the school debarred from a gratification to which I thought myself as much entitled as my young companions, I determined, if possible, to be upon an equality with them. Twice in the week a person was allowed to come within the walls that enclosed our play-ground, with fruits and pastry ; and from this man, when opportunity offered, I occasionally filched a tart, apples, pears, or plumbs, as it might happen ; and being fortunate, or rather unfortunate enough, as it proved in the issue, to escape detection, I commenced pilfering from the boys their weekly allowance, and thus, very shortly, became the richest of the juvenile community.

The habits of early life generally decide the aspect of our future years. My success in these juvenile peculations emboldened me to attempt greater things ; and I soon robbed the master of

several pounds, for which I was severely flogged, and dismissed from the school. My uncle was so exasperated at my baseness, that he would not receive me within his doors, but placed me in the house of the same woman who had nursed me, where I quickly threw off all restraint, and young as I was, soon became a confirmed swindler. I confined myself at first to such petty matters in this way, that where detection followed, I usually escaped punishment.

‘ I was now fifteen, when I became acquainted with the marker of a billiard-table, who initiated me into the mysteries of that noble game, and before I was seventeen, I was second only to himself in skill. None of the players who frequented the table were at all a match for me; and I contrived occasionally to win considerable sums, which were no sooner obtained, than dissipated in licentious and vulgar pleasures. The more I gained, the more I squandered. I knew my father had left me a comfortable income, which I expected to enjoy so soon as I should attain my one-and-twentieth year; but it was so entirely under the control of my guardian, for the present, that I could not obtain a sixpence of it. He had altogether abandoned me; and, as I had not received a farthing from him, neither had any sums been dis-

bursed since my fifteenth year, the accumulating interest of five years, as I calculated, would, of course, be added to the principal.

About this time I forged my uncle's signature to a draught, and being detected, he stipulated that if I would immediately go to sea, he would forbear to prosecute; to which alternative, though anything but agreeable to a youth of my restless turn of mind, I readily assented, glad to get out of a serious scrape upon such easy terms. I afterwards discovered that this leniency on his part was no act of mercy, for he would have been glad to have got me hanged,—but was apprehensive, that if he gave too great publicity to my knavery, it would bring before the eye of the world his own neglect of me, and other more weighty matters, which he was anxious to conceal. Heartily as I despised him, I never suspected him to be the villain he subsequently proved.


The vessel on board which I was put, was a merchantman; the crew consisting of four men and a stout lad, about my own age. I did not at all like the novelty of my situation. Though I had long been in the habit of associating with knaves and sharpers, I had chosen my companions from such as were not positively low. The habits of my present companions were, beyond expression, odious to me. Being the youngest, I was at the beck and call of

each of them; and if I failed to do their bidding with prompt alacrity, a kick or a cuff was the invariable reminder of my tardiness. The work, moreover, which I was obliged to perform, was menial in the extreme. My soul sickened at being obliged to scrub the cabin-floor, wash foul linen, clean pots and kettles, with sundry other occupations equally unintellectual, and some positively disgusting.

‘ The skipper of the vessel was a surly brute, who, knowing I had been sent to sea to save me from hanging, took it into his stupid head, that a rope’s end was the most salutary discipline he could employ to “bring me about,” as he said; and in accordance with this sage conclusion, he generally visited my shoulders once a day, until they exhibited the most striking hues of the rainbow. Instead of taming me, this only served to make me more dogged and troublesome. Having more wit than the whole of the ship’s crew put together, which I might fairly say, without calling my modesty into question, I continually thwarted, and so perplexed them, that they thought it, at length, the wiser policy so use me kindly. The skipper found my advice useful, and the other men eventually followed his example, in treating me civilly; but the boy and I were continually quarrelling. He was a dull, stupid tyrant, everlastingly trying

to impose upon me some labour, which, at his bidding, I always refused to perform ; and he, at length, fixed my hatred so unalienably, that I could not look at him without loathing.

‘ One morning having ordered me to do some drudgery, which I refused, he immediately struck me. This was too much for endurance, and I returned the blow with my whole force, striking him between the eyes, and cast him on his back upon the deck. He rose with the fury of a gored bull, and we had a contest for some minutes ; but his superior strength and hardihood soon prevailed, and I was dreadfully beaten. This increased my detestation, and I felt a fiendish spirit of revenge, which I could not control, over-mastering every better sentiment of humanity. His easy victory only made my enemy the more insolent, and thenceforward I never received a command from him unaccompanied either by a blow or a malediction, which kept up the perpetual rankling within me ; and I determined, at whatever cost, to release myself from the tyranny of this odious bully. To do so, however, required all the caution with which I was furnished, and knew well how to employ. As his insolence increased with my submission, for I now ceased to resist his will, the skipper interfered in my behalf, which produced some relaxation in the oppression of my tormentor.



‘In order to produce a reaction in my favour, I applied myself to gain the good-will of the skipper and his companions, and to turn their former ill-will from myself to the youth whom I so cordially hated. As he was of a stubborn, unaccommodating temper, I soon succeeded in doing this: the consequence was, that he frequently obtained a portion of the stripes with which he was in the habit of visiting me. This rendered his dislike of me the more inveterate, and whenever he found me alone, he always took the opportunity of trying the hardness of his knuckles upon my head. Though I often saw him severely punished, my revenge was not satisfied, and my resolution to accomplish it was never for a moment from my mind. It formed the subject of my dreams by night, and of my thoughts by day; and so entirely did it absorb me, that I grew absent, and occasionally provoked the application of the rope’s-end from the skipper, for what he considered my inattention. This I now bore without grieving, because, upon the whole, his conduct towards me had greatly improved, and his severity towards the object of my aversion had as greatly increased. Moreover, the hopes of accomplishing my vengeance, which I had persuaded myself was perfectly justifiable, so engrossed my soul, that I had no room for repining, and the quiescent manner in which

I bore the punishment occasionally inflicted upon me, was interpreted in my favour, as arising from a feeling of laudable submission.

‘ It was the habit of my tormentor, whenever he went aloft, to slide down upon deck on one of the ropes. I had observed this, and at length resolved to make it the means of accomplishing my long-cherished purpose of retribution. One morning, having occasion to do something at the mast-head, I took care to loosen the rope before I descended, thus giving myself a chance of effecting my object, without the possibility of detection. In the course of that morning the youth ascended the rigging. I trembled with anxiety. As I had anticipated, in order to accomplish a quicker descent, he seized, as usual, the now loosened rope, and casting his whole weight upon it, fell headlong on the deck. His skull was so dreadfully fractured, that he almost instantly died. My vengeance was complete, and I looked on the corpse of my enemy with an emotion of inward triumph. Not the slightest suspicion attached to me. The body was sown up in a hammock, and cast into the sea, without one single aspiration to Heaven for the repose of a departed soul.

‘ Two days after this, we anchored at the island of St. Michael’s, one of the Azores, where we took in a cargo of oranges, with which we returned home-

ward. Cold and deliberate as had been the murder, it did not for a moment discompose my thoughts. I looked upon it as an act of justifiable homicide, and therefore savagely triumphed at what I had done. The deed has not passed beyond the sanctuary of my own bosom ;—I reveal it for the first time ; and never, until now, has it produced a single pang of remorse. But death reckons sternly with us, and as memory recalls this black act of my existence, my brain turns, and my conscience is stung at the bitter recollection. It at this moment smites my soul with a severity that seems to blast it. The thought of being a murderer never really agonized me until now. The bed of death is the place where conscience is loudest and where remorse is keenest.

‘ No sooner had we landed at Liverpool, than I ran away from the ship, and proceeded to Birmingham, not with any specific object, but rather because caprice led me thither. I was without a friend in the world ; my clothes were of the meanest, and I was utterly penniless. As it happened to be the Autumn, I fed upon turnips, and other esculents which the fields supplied, and the starry sky was the canopy under which I slept. I occasionally begged ; but the pittance I obtained in this way was small, as I avoided resorting to this alternative in the towns through which I passed,

lest I should be taken up as a vagrant, and forced to give some account of myself, which might lead to my detection, and cause me to be sent to my uncle,—an issue I by no means desired. The few pence with which casual charity supplied me, on the road, I carefully hoarded; and thus, on my arrival at Birmingham, found myself in possession of six shillings and sixpence. This, indeed, was but a scanty store, yet I trusted to my wits soon to increase it.

‘ The day after my arrival at this populous town, I stationed myself at what appeared to me a promising spot, in the principal street, where I swept a passage for the more convenient transit of passengers, and by the adroitness of my importunity, soon contrived to accumulate a tolerably good living. At night I repaired to a sort of receptacle for the destitute, where very good food, and very poor lodging, were to be had, upon extremely reasonable terms. Here I met with the most profligate wretches, and soon added to my stock of knowledge in the art of overreaching the unwary. I gambled, though in a small way, with success; but all the money thus obtained was spent as soon as acquired; and I never rose to take my station at the crossing which I daily swept, but as a needy man. My manners were always respectful, and I was so constantly at my post, that

many persons, living in the street, after a while, took notice of me, and gave me a something daily.

An old gentleman lived near the spot where I every morning stationed myself. Having heard that he was a very wealthy man, and as kind-hearted as he was rich, I always made a point of sweeping the pavement before his door ; for which gratuitous service, every Saturday night, he sent me half-a-crown.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GAMBLER'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.—HE IS ENGAGED AT A THEATRE.—HIS SUCCESS.—TAKES A BENEFIT.—IS PATRONISED.—QUITS THE STAGE.—ENTERS THE UNIVERSITY.—HIS CONDUCT.—HIS COMPANIONS.—A SWINDLER.—THEIR CONFEDERACY, AND MUTUAL DISLIKE.

‘It happened one day that a passenger assailed me with gross abuse, because I held out my hand for a gratuity, as he crossed the street. I expostulated; he became vehement, and a crowd soon collected. I parried his abuse with quiet sarcasm, at which I had always been ready, and this provoking the laughter of the crowd against him, only excited his anger to greater paroxysms. After threatening personal violence, which I derided with keen, but calm irony, he gave up the altercation, and quitted the spot, amid the hootings of the multitude.

‘It chanced, that among the latter was a person connected with the Birmingham theatre, who, being struck with my smartness, in the late war of words, accosted me with great civility, and asked me if I should not like to exchange my condition for something more suitable to the evident superiority of my mind. As this was a thing to which I could have no possible objection, I briefly told him that I was the victim of circumstances, and expressed my

willingness to engage immediately in any respectable employment for which I might be considered suited. He appointed me to meet him next day at the theatre, where, after a few preliminary questions, I was engaged as one of the scene-shifters, and to do any contingent offices that the interests of the establishment might require. This was what I liked of all things. There was novelty,—there was excitement in it. My ambition was roused. I longed to appear upon the boards; and this longing made me exceedingly attentive to my duties, which were sufficiently hard, and not over well paid.

‘ Shortly after my instalment, I became an oracle among the scene-shifters, candle-snuffers, thunder-makers, and other understrappers, and in due time was preferred to the enviable distinction of wearing a livery, and of removing tables and chairs from the stage, in sight of the audience. From this I was advanced to the dignity of playing wild beasts, in pantomimes. My last exhibition in that way was a dancing-bear, which was considered so creditable a performance, and elicited such applause from a crowded house, that I was thenceforward looked upon as the Roscius of dumb animals. My next step was to the personation of footmen, bumbailiffs, and similar indispensable accessories to modern comedy and farce.

‘ Within the year after my association with

the dramatic company at Birmingham, I became one of the greatest public favourites among them, and before the expiration of another year, I took the chief comic parts. My reputation rose rapidly. I had ahand some countenance, and a well-proportioned figure, which were of great advantage to me in all parts where person and figure were of importance. I received sundry letters, containing declarations of love, from romantic young ladies, who perceived not the quondam sweeper in the favourite actor, but were struck with the mere adventitious beauties of form and lineament, in a man of whom they knew nothing, except that he was universally admitted to be a great acquisition to the Birmingham stage.

‘ From playing parts in dramas, I began to write them; and one of my productions in this way met with such signal success, that I seriously looked forward to being eventually immortalized. Having been so fortunate in dramatic composition, I tried my hand at a tragedy: this, however, entirely failed, which somewhat damped my ardour. All my little farces and melo-dramas were successful, and I was, at length, raised into provincial celebrity, not only as an actor, but likewise as a dramatic writer. My society was soon courted. I became a sort of lion; and scarcely a day passed in which I

did not receive an invitation to the house of some opulent family.

‘ Although the tide of success continued to flow onward, my early habits had been too indelibly fixed to be readily eradicated. I obtained a respectable income, — nevertheless, I was seldom possessed of a shilling. I could not resist the temptation of gambling; and, though my extraordinary skill, combined with my lax notions of honour, rendered me almost invariably successful, yet the habit of spending was so inveterate, that I never kept a guinea in my pocket for two hours together. Upon the whole, however, my life was a happy one, if there is really any happiness in mere animal enjoyment. I was flattered and caressed, and, being under age, I had the prospect of rising to still greater distinction.

‘ For the first time, I was allowed to take a benefit: it was a bumper, and the next morning I found myself in possession of a clear fifty pounds sterling. I gave a brilliant dinner to the company, by way of signalizing my success, and by the time I went to bed was as penniless as before I took my benefit. It was the means, however, of advancing my fortune unexpectedly. The wealthy merchant, before whose door I used to sweep, and who had kindly sent me half-a-crown every Saturday night,

took two boxes on the evening of my professional speculation, for which he liberally gave me a cheque on his banker for twelve guineas. On the following day he called upon me, to express the delight he had received at my acting. He was accompanied by a niece, the daughter of an only brother, who had left her an orphan at the tender age of eleven years. She was a pretty innocent-looking creature, with that unsophisticated simplicity of character which is so much more attractive than the mere passive beauty of form and feature.

‘To my surprise, the old man asked me to make his house my home. He had taken an unaccountable liking to me, and, as it afterwards appeared, I had made a signal impression upon the heart of his niece. He had watched my rising reputation, he said, and could not but feel respect for a man who had elevated himself, by the force of intellect, from one of the lowest stations in society, to a state of high dignity; for, according to his idea, nothing could be higher than being in possession of public approbation. The old man had always been a great lover and supporter of the drama; and my talent, both as a writer and performer, had secured his warmest esteem.

‘I was not more agreeably surprised than flattered by the good old gentleman’s proposal, to which I readily assented, and shortly became an

inmate of his country-house, a splendid mansion, about six miles out of the town. I now found it necessary to eschew the evil company with whom I had been accustomed to associate, thinking that it would at least be prudent to wear the mask of morality for a time, in order to produce a favourable impression upon the mind of my patron, as to the habitual quiet and sober integrity of my moral behaviour.

‘ After six months, I quitted the stage, and appeared to devote myself to the domestic comfort of the man who had furnished me with such a luxurious home. He soon declared his intention of sending me to Cambridge, provided I would make up my mind to study for the Bar, a profession, he said, in which he was satisfied I should cut a figure. The idea of going to the University was one which I had often hopelessly entertained. The prospect of its now being realized, imparted to my heart a joy that I cannot pretend to express. My patron proposed to allow me four hundred a-year, and that I should draw upon him for the additional charge of a private tutor. The thought of being emancipated from the restraint under which I felt it prudent to live beneath my patron’s roof, gave such elasticity to my spirits, that I could scarcely repress them in his presence.

‘ At the age of twenty-one, after having seen

more of life's changes and chances than most men who have arrived at the close of a long life, I entered myself at —— College, Cambridge, and kept my first term without the occurrence of any event worth recording. I soon became acquainted with all the gay men, of a certain class, at the university, and before the expiration of the first term, had the reputation of being one of the best riders and best billiard-players in the county. About this time I heard of my uncle's death: he fell dead in a fit of intoxication, without leaving behind him a sixpence. The whole of my property had been dissipated by this base guardian.

‘My career at the university was brilliant, but immoral to the last degree. My natural acuteness of understanding rendered me a favourite at my college; and while I stood first at the different examinations, my delinquencies were either overlooked, or only noticed by an occasional reprimand. I seduced several young men who had large allowances from their friends, to gamble, and many were the victims who owed their final ruin to a companionship with me. I was almost invariably successful at play, and for two reasons:—first, because I played with great dexterity, and next, because my conscience was none of that tender kind which shrinks from taking any unfair advantage that may be seized, without being perceived by an adversary. I had no principles of honour. Indeed,

as far as I have perceived, honour, in the legitimate sense of the word, is nowhere recognised by the habitual gambler. The moment a man becomes the one, he withdraws himself, as by a criminal instinct, from the other. I have witnessed scenes amid the lurid silence of those hells, as they are emphatically called, into which the professed gambler stalks, like a demon to his infernal home, that would reach a heart in the centre of a sea-girt rock. I have seen the cool villain, with a sedate smile upon his smooth inflexible cheek, over which no expression but that of sordid avarice ever played, gaze on the agonies of the frantic dreamer, who has embraced the mad alternative of temporary gain or utter ruin, and sunk blasted and penniless upon the floor, while the gibe of mockery rang in his ear from the heartless miscreant who had goaded him on to beggary, and defrauded him of his last shilling.

‘I can now feel, as the shadows of memory flit across my brain, like departed ghosts of the past, what spectacles of misery have been presented before my eyes, and wrought out by my villany. By me, hundreds have been warped from a high sense of honour, to an utter abandonment of all that she upholds and sanctifies. By me, hundreds have been dragged into the den of pollution, who else might have been a credit to their generation, and a solace, instead of a degradation, to their families. The

consciousness of this shakes me, at this moment, in spite of myself; the misdeeds of my short, but busy life, busy only in crime, start up like so many spectres around me, and give the lie to that infidelity, behind the doubtful fences of which I have intrenched my wavering and unconfiding belief. If I had been the only victim of my own guilt,—if I had not withdrawn so many others from the fair and flowery paths of virtue,—if I had not depraved the minds of hundreds, who, but for me, might now be happy in their innocence,—I should not be so overborne by a fiery remorse in this day of visitation. But I have no time for such fruitless reflections. The sad hour of summons advances rapidly: I will, therefore, while the time is yet before me, produce the dark calendar of guilt which has marked my eventful career.

‘Among my choice companions at Cambridge, was a man much of my own character, with whom I was constantly associated in acts of the most abominable fraud. He was the younger son of a wealthy commoner, and having spent a fortune of thirty thousand pounds, left him by an uncle, his father threatened to discard him from his family for ever, unless he kept terms at Cambridge to qualify him for wearing a barrister’s wig, in order that he might be ultimately able to cover his delinquencies under the sanction of a respectable profession. He

was some years older than myself, though many younger in experience. He was, in the strictest sense of the word, an illiterate man ; but possessing great acuteness, and such a rapid and sure perception of character, as to be seldom mistaken in his opinion of men, after a short intercourse. He was addicted to excesses of all kinds, and, except when he desired to have his head clear for some purpose of villany at the billiard or hazard tables, never went to bed but in a state of beastly intoxication. I have seen him drink four bottles of wine after dinner, and repeat it for six successive days ; and yet this man was the delight of every company into which he was admitted. He possessed an original and racy wit. His fund of anecdote was inexhaustible. Nothing escaped his observation ; and, having a quick sense of the ridiculous, he gave an air of smart lively humour to everything he told. The general impression of his character was, that he was the best tempered creature in the world, while, in truth, he happened to be one of the most consummate villains. His sottish habits were redeemed, in the eyes of the young and thoughtless men whom he was in the habit of assembling around him, by that sparkling vivacity of conversation, for which he was distinguished above all the men I have ever known. This unpremeditated gaiety of character gained for him the entire

confidence of the inexperienced and unsuspecting, and he never failed to take fearful advantage of the confidence reposed in him.

‘ Such was the man with whom I was allied in the lowest acts of petty swindling. We used to play with loaded dice, and so successfully as perfectly to escape detection. Though so liberally provided with money by my patron, my habits of extravagance were such, that my whole allowance was always exhausted before the expiration of a single term. Although I was as morally depraved as a man well could be, yet, as intoxication was not among my vices, I stood in much better odour with the master and tutors of my college than many more deserving men, who were addicted to this indulgence. I had, besides, the skill to disguise my delinquencies: thus, though I was considered a gay man, I was not looked upon as a depraved one.

‘ The only person in the university really acquainted with my character was he of whom I have just spoken. There was really no cordiality of feeling between us, but we were united by a league of mutual interest, which, externally, cemented a friendship of the world, not of the heart. We felt secure of each other’s secresy, while the bond which we mutually held, could not be broken without a community of loss and disgrace. We never had any differences, but still we were never cordial; and

when I now calmly examine my heart, as to the state of my feelings towards N——, at the time when I was associated with him in so close a bond of alliance, I feel that hatred, suppressed, indeed, but not extinguished, lurked within it.'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GAMBLER'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.—A VICTIM.—
THE RUPTURE.—A DISCOVERY.—ITS CONSEQUENCES.—
THE DUEL.—EXPULSION FROM COLLEGE.—HIS RETURN
TO HIS PATRON.—HIS PROPOSALS TO MARY.—HE MAR-
RIES HER.—HIS UNKINDNESS.—HER DEATH.

‘ ABOUT this time, a young nobleman came, a freshman, to Cambridge, with no experience and plenty of money. This embryo Peer we fixed upon as a promising victim. We soon discovered that he was an easy youth, full of vanity and simplicity, and one that might be easily flattered into losing his money, by being assured that he was a dexterous player. We soon contrived to ease this young noble, —though noble only in the aristocratic sense of the word,—of fifteen hundred pounds. It happened that while we were employed in the mysteries of our unhallowed confederation against the purse of this youthful aristocrat, a coldness took place between us, in consequence of N—— suspecting that I had weaned from him the affection of a young female, to whom he was paying his addresses. He had made her an offer, which she refused.

‘ His rejection he chose to attribute to me, because the girl had taken my arm instead of his, one Sunday afternoon, on our return from church. In the

bitterness of his disappointment, he accused me of having created in her mind a prejudice against him, in order to ingratiate myself in her favour. This did not happen to be the case, though he was perhaps justified in suspecting it, as he knew me sufficiently well to be assured that I should not hesitate to do that of which he suspected me, if it either suited my purpose or my inclination. I, however, unhesitatingly denied the accusation, when he charged me with an attempt, as he said, somewhat ludicrously, against his happiness. He received my denial with an implied distrust of my veracity, which, though I was conscious of deserving it, nevertheless aggravated me extremely, and many words of mutual and bitter recrimination passed between us. We parted in anger, but after the ebullition had subsided, we met with the appearance, at least, of reconciliation.

‘ On the following day we were both engaged at hazard with the young nobleman of whom I have already spoken. After a few throws for trifling stakes, and just as I had won a hundred and fifty pounds, to my astonishment, N—— exclaimed in an affected tone of indignation, that I was playing with loaded dice. This produced a vehement altercation between us, which ended in his exposing the deception. I was called upon to refund my winnings, which I declined doing, but walking

to the grate, threw the charged dice into the fire.

‘ A tremendous uproar ensued, in which N—— bore a conspicuous part, calling me sharper, and pouring upon me every epithet of malignant opprobrium. In vain I recriminated: no one present would believe that the man who had exposed me was a sharer in my baseness. He was known to be a shrewd man, and my detection was therefore attributed to his acuteness and vigilance. This galled me beyond what I can express. I was mortified at being so completely outwitted.

‘ Although I had always known that N—— was an unprincipled scoundrel, I had never for a moment calculated that his malignity would lead him to the length of betraying me, when he was so nearly interested in his association with me. I knew his love of money to be great, but had to discover that his love of vengeance was greater. I retired from the scene of exposure, boiling with rage. It was clear to me that I could no longer remain a member of the University, and therefore determined to anticipate my expulsion, and quit it on the following day. I had, however, an account to settle with the author of my disgrace, which I resolved should be final.

‘ I was an admirable shot. I had a brace of Manton’s pistols, and it was my habit to fire at a mark,

for some time, every day ; and, so expert, had I become, by constant practice, that, at a distance of fourteen yards, I could pass a ball through the section of an apple, converting it into a hollow circle, by leaving only a narrow margin beyond the circumference of the ball.

‘ On this day I continued my practice much longer than usual, and in the evening sent a hostile message to N——, appointing a meeting by sun-rise the following morning. My adversary, as well as myself, was a practised shot. This I knew, as I had frequently seen specimens of his skill, but had always taken care to keep my own dexterity a secret, that, in case I ever happened to be engaged in a duel, the circumstance might not tell against me, should the result prove fatal to my antagonist. N——, conscious of his own sureness of aim, and imagining that I was without skill in the use of a pistol, readily accepted my challenge, and the place of meeting was appointed about a mile and half from the town. The gall at this moment overflowed my heart, and boiled like a lava flood within me ; but I was calm,—yet mine was the calm of a stagnant and implacable malice, which nothing could either move or modify. My countenance was a mask, on which a dusky smile undulated over the features, that resembled the gloomy repose of the elements just before the tempest bursts, and

lashes them into a fury that brings along with it disaster, desolation, and death.

‘ I never shall forget my feelings at that hour. They had frequently been excited, frequently been roused into fearful commotion, but never before to such an extent. They had prompted me to murder, which I had executed with cold and fiendish premeditation ; but my soul now lusted for vengeance with so savage a craving, that I felt as if I could endure the rack without a groan, could I but see my enemy lifeless at my feet. My blood bounded through my veins with an impetus which almost maddened me, and so painful was the tumult within, that at an early hour of the evening I threw myself upon my bed, in order to seek relief in the forgetfulness of sleep ; but slumber was a stranger to my senses. It mocked my wooing, and I arose by daylight feverish and unrefreshed.

‘ I was bent upon inflicting death. I knew the certainty of my aim, and resolved that my antagonist should go to his account, though I might also follow him to mine—but for that I cared not. Accompanied by my second, I walked to the appointed place of meeting, with a firm step. The fierce emotions of my bosom were kept down by an effort of stubborn pride, which would not for a moment entertain the thought of appearing before the man

whom I abhorred, but with an unruffled brow, and an air of easy indifference.

‘ Shortly after we reached the ground, N—— appeared with his second. His face was flushed; but there was an expression of defiant scorn, curling the corners of his pale lip, that stung me to the soul. I observed in his small gray eye a gleam of anticipated triumph. I retorted the glance, and my cheek quivered as I said,—

‘ “ Come, sir,—this is not a matter to waste time upon. I thought I should have found you more ready.”

‘ “ Nay,” said he, bitterly, “ you might have spared your insolence, in consideration of my condescending to meet a common sharper,—a fellow who plays with loaded dice; but he shall see that I can as readily meet a knave and a bully, when he insults me, as I can an honest man.”

‘ “ Scoundrel,” I roared—

‘ Here our seconds interfered, and declared they would leave the ground, if we continued the altercation. In a moment I felt a horrid pause, as it were, in the leaping of my blood, and a deathly calm came over my tortured spirit. Every nerve was strung to a tension that precluded anything like a tremor. Ten paces were measured, and I grasped the engine of death with an untrembling

clutch and a deadliness of purpose never to be forgotten. N—— confronted me with the same scornful smile. The wild thought shot through my brain, that in a few moments more he would be a lifeless thing—a lump of senseless earth. I then wished, for his sake, that there might hereafter be a hell!

‘It was agreed, that at the words “present—fire”—given by my second, we should discharge our pistols together. Intense as had been my excitement, I was now as cool and collected as if I had just risen from the most refreshing slumber. My greedy ear drank in the signal with agonizing delight, and, as the last word passed from the lip of him who gave it, I discharged my engine of death. The ball, true to an unerring hand, entered the breast of my antagonist; he sprang from the ground, with a quick, sharp shriek, and fell upon his face. His pistol was not discharged. For two or three seconds he lay, while I stood on the very spot where I had fired, gazing with demoniacal satisfaction, on my fallen foe. After a short interval, he rose upon his knee, and desired his second to lift him. The gore bubbled from his lips. I saw, with a smile of savage joy, that he was dying. He desired that the pistol might be again put into his hand. He grasped it with trembling eagerness. “Leave me,” he cried, to his

second, who still supported him, and, standing alone, he coolly raised the instrument of destruction. I suppose his sight became dim, as he directed it obliquely. He paused an instant with his pistol raised, staggering rapidly towards me. His features were convulsed with the deep concentrated purpose which urged him on. He did not pause, but continued his career, with a certain oscillation of movement, that showed the last gleam of consciousness to be fading from his brain. When he came within my reach, I dashed his arm upwards; the pistol exploded, and the ball passed harmlessly over my head. Nature had made her last effort: the miserable man fell forward, dead. Exasperated by the desperate attempt upon my life, I spurned the corse, with a loud and savage curse.

‘ I quitted the ground, entered a post-chaise, which I had ordered to wait for me, at a village, about half-a-mile from the scene of action, and proceeded towards Birmingham. As I had anticipated, I was expelled. I was tried, as is usual on these occasions of honourable murder, and acquitted. My protector received me kindly, though mortified at my expulsion. He believed my version of the matter, and looked upon me as a much abused young man.

‘ For some months after this affair, I was very

regular in my conduct, in order that I might not rouse the suspicions of my confiding and generous friend. He applauded my sobriety, and I was satisfied that he knew not how venomous a snake he was harbouring in his bosom. It had long been evident to me that the niece of this kind old man,—a pretty, tender-hearted girl, with more beauty and gentleness of nature, than readiness of perception, or strength of mind,—entertained for me an affection that could not be mistaken. She had a small fortune of five thousand pounds; and there could be no doubt that she would ultimately come into possession of the whole of her uncle's property, as she was the nearest relation he had in the world, and he was greatly attached to her.

‘ The uncle was not long in discovering her predilection for me, which he endeavoured to prevail on her to discourage, as he considered my principles to be yet too unsettled, to render an alliance with me, for the present, a prudent measure. He moreover, looked forward to her marrying a member of some family of distinction; for he had often said, that she was fit to become the wife of a duke. It soon appeared, however, that her affections were so deeply fixed, as to render opposition to her wishes a measure more than likely to entail misery upon her future life; and he did not oppose our union, when he saw that it was the settled object of both

our hearts. The fact is, that I entertained nothing but the most selfish feeling towards this gentle creature, who loved me with a devotedness which I knew neither how to appreciate, nor how to return. I was gratified by her preference. I was pleased with her beauty. I was flattered, that others, wealthy and high-born men, sought her hand, and were rejected for my sake; but I loved her not with that pure and absorbing affection which alone can beam the light of joy upon the domestic hearth, imparting bloom and freshness to the fair blossoms of hope, and mingling the subtle element of happiness with every inspiration imbibed from the great fountain of life.

‘Mary —— knew me not; she was too unsuspecting to discover the reptile which I harboured within my bosom. The money she possessed, and her great expectations, decided me at once to render her miserable, by making her the wife of one who knew not how to love. She little dreamed into what a gulf of misery she was about to precipitate herself, when she accepted my proffered hand, with my declaration, that it was the pledge of her having won a heart as sincere and fervent as her own. Her uncle, it is true, consented to our union with some reluctance, yet he put a cheque for fifteen thousand pounds into my hand, and gave me his blessing; and on the following

morning I led the innocent Mary —— to the altar.

‘Almost from that hour she was a miserable woman. I took possession of her money; for her I cared little, and almost immediately slighted her. Poor Mary!—she soon found that the rose of happiness, which opened so fairly before her, had a worm at the root, and was now a withered scentless thing. Her peace was already “with the things o’erpast.” She was stunned by my unexpected neglect. She drooped in silence; not a murmur escaped her lips,—but the kind uncle, my generous patron, saw the warm glow of health recede from her cheek, and he upbraided me with my indifference. I was too proud to conciliate where I had once given cause for anger; yet I forbore to exasperate him, because I knew that it could not benefit me, but might greatly mar my interest. I promised amendment, but grew colder still. My wife was neglected for the society of sharpers and demireps. Still her uncle knew not the excess of my iniquity. As I never treated her with positive harshness, and took care to conceal from him the nature of my pursuits, and the sort of companions with whom I held intercourse, he merely imagined that I was cold, but hoped, when years had added sobriety to my experience, I should better appreciate the rare qualities of my wife, and make amends for present indifference

‘Alas, he knew me not. He little then thought how soon that indifference would plant the shaft of death into the purest bosom that ever breathed. Poor Mary never uttered a reproach. She always received me with smiles—with caresses; but the languid eye, the pale cheek, and tottering gait, at length convinced me that she was rapidly passing to a more congenial world.

‘The first time this thought struck me, I was confounded. It called up, for a moment, the better feelings of my nature. I reflected upon her goodness, her innocence, her beauty. I repented, sought her society, and treated her with a tenderness usually foreign to my nature: but it was too late. The tender blossom had been shaken too rudely. She received my caresses with hysterical joy, and died in my arms, blessing me. Her death affected me deeply. I never felt anything of the kind so strongly; and, under the influence of real emotion, I wrote the following lines, on the night of her death:—

MARY.

The tear was in her eye;
Upon the lid it hung—
Yet smiles were on her cheek,
And music on her tongue.

The pure hue of her soul
 Was traced upon her brow—
 How bright a thing on earth !
 But how much brighter now !

The sunshine of her smile
 Was soon to be o'ercast ;
 For o'er her spirit's bloom
 The blight of sorrow past.
 The worm that never dies
 But with the dying breath,
 Gnawed deep, and on her cheek
 Spread the pale hues of death.

She perished in her prime.
 Brief was her life's eclipse ;
 Yet e'en in death the smile
 Played on her faded lips :
 She seemed but in a sleep,—
 So calm the spirit past,—
 And, like a setting star,
 Was lovely to the last.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GAMBLER'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.—A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.—HIS END.—SIR PHILIP A——.—HIS WIFE.—HIS INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS HER.—HIS LOVE OF PLAY.—ITS CONSEQUENCES.—LADY A—— LEAVES HER HOME.—WHAT FOLLOWS.—A FORGERY, AND ITS RESULTS.—THE GAMBLER'S NARRATIVE CONCLUDED.—REFLECTIONS.

‘ I soon forgot the loss I had sustained in the death of my wife, and became a man of the town. My patron had now utterly discarded me, and, within three years, the twenty thousand pounds, which I had obtained by my marriage, was gone, and I became a penniless sharper. I was well known at the clubs, at Newmarket, and at the hells. I passed for a black-leg, which, in truth, I was, and of the very worst of that very bad class. I had the reputation of being a handsome dashing fellow, with an original wit, which rendered my society welcome to many wild young men, with tolerably full purses, not so depraved as myself, yet not over fastidious about the characters with whom they associated. These were my constant dupes; and though I was continually robbing them, it was surprising, even to myself, how adroitly I contrived to escape their suspicion.

‘For certain periods, when I could find no pigeons to pluck, I wrote for the daily papers. I had always possessed considerable aptitude in acquiring languages, and when my ordinary occupations failed, I used to translate for the booksellers. At any time, I could have obtained a comfortable subsistence by this honest mode of providing for nature’s wants; but I scorned, I detested the drudgery. The stimulus of excitement, in its most depraved form, was necessary to my existence. I had no sympathy with repose. Fraud, cunning, and knavery, of the worst kinds, were the buds out of which the deformed blossoms of my enjoyments grew. Like a foul and unsightly grub, I could only live in a pestilential atmosphere, and I only dieted, morally speaking, upon corruption.

‘About this time a young man of fortune arrived from abroad. We met at Newmarket. I soon became his constant companion. For months I won from him nightly large sums, which I spent with the same ease that I obtained them, for I supported a most licentious establishment, comprising every element of extravagance and profligacy which unbridled libertinism could devise.

‘My dupe had hitherto bled freely, and without repining. His fortune of fifty thousand pounds was reduced to fifteen thousand; and I perceived that he began to be melancholy and absent. I

rallied him, but he smiled bitterly. His cheek had become pale, his eye sunken, his lips thin. His hands trembled, grew delicate, and lost their roundness. His gait was tortuous, his manner hurried, his air often distracted. It was evident that he was suffering deeply. He had a mother and a sister depending upon him for support. He began to drink drams; and one day when he was labouring under the factitious elevation produced by this growing propensity, I enticed him into a gambling-house, and within two hours he had not a penny in the world. He staggered home, and the next day I beheld him a corpse. A pistol had concluded his reckoning in this world.

‘ This sad end of one whom I had driven to such a desperate act, did not at all move me. I despised the recreant who had not the courage to look misfortune in the face, and, when it came, shake hands with it, as I had done, and resort to that policy which gains a man money at the sacrifice of honour; taking Falstaff’s definition of this latter word as the true one, and putting the lamp of virtue under a bushel, where it could not light to wealth. Such were my thoughts; but that tide in the affairs of men which leads on to fortune has ebbed, and left me on the bed of suffering, tortured in body, and stung by the maledictions of a tortured conscience.

‘ My crimes now began to thicken, or rather to

deepen, in intensity. One evening, happening to be at the theatre, I saw a dashing person enter one of the boxes in the dress circle, with a young creature under his arm, of a beauty as dazzling as it was uncommon. Its effect upon me was electric. I gazed at her in silent admiration, and in a moment my determination was made. I had no difficulty in perceiving that her companion was her husband, from the cold common-place manner of his attentions to her. He was rather a well-looking person, but an unrefined coxcomb, who was continually spreading open his waistcoat, to show a set of handsome shirt-buttons, and as continually putting the palm of his hand, with great tenderness, against his hair, in order to ascertain if the wind had “visited it too rudely,” and disarranged any of the unnatural curls into which it had been tortured. When he quitted the theatre I ascertained his name, by seeing it written on the box-keeper’s table as follows:—“Sir Philip A——, No. 17, two places, front dress circle.”

‘There was no great difficulty in discovering the abode of Sir Philip A——, nor in ascertaining the clubs which he frequented. I soon perceived that he was a sporting character; for what real man of fashion is not? I, therefore, was constant in my attendance at Tattersal’s for the several subsequent days. I saw him there almost daily, and took an

opportunity of addressing him. Our conversation was the most casual thing in the world, but I soon perceived that mine had caught his attention. I was full of information upon the subjects which most interested him. We frequently met, and our intimacy gradually thickened. I had everywhere the reputation of being a "remarkably clever man," and under the reputation which this obtained for me, the knavery of my disposition was, in a measure, hidden. It threw a certain hue of brightness around the dark points of my character.

‘Sir Philip and I at length became friends, and to my great joy, I was invited to his house. This was what I ardently longed for. I went, my countenance, no doubt, animated with a smile of anticipated triumph; for when he introduced me to his wife, he congratulated me upon my improved good looks. Almost immediately after our introduction, he quitted the apartment, and left us together.

‘I was disgusted at his apathy, though I hailed it as a propitious omen. I found her as lovely as I had anticipated, but with timid retiring manners. She seemed hurt at being left alone with a stranger, though she did not express it. She rang for her maid, whom, under some pretence or other, she kept in the room during the whole period of my visit. I was delighted with the evident purity of her mind, and envied the callous husband who en-

joyed the possession of such a treasure. I soon ascertained that Sir Philip had first seen her in the country. Her father was a clergyman, with a large family and a small income; and the beauty of the rector's daughter had thawed the frost around the baronet's heart. With matrimony his constitutional coldness returned, and he soon treated her not only with indifference, but with neglect. She felt the change sorely, but submitted to her trial with a patient spirit.

‘For months I visited at this house constantly, and by my delicate but almost reserved attention to Lady A——, eventually subdued her timidity, and slid gradually, like a snake, into her confidence. I affected a refinement of delicacy, which caught her attention, and evidently soon won her esteem. Day by day her reserve decreased; but I knew the innate delicacy of her nature too well to take an open advantage of this growing confidence. Her husband frequently treated her with great harshness, but she did not repine; and I never once ventured to allude to the subject, knowing full well that she would have been immediately awake to the liberty, and I should have as immediately lost the ground in her favour which I had already gained.

‘I had not been so long acquainted with the baronet without taking advantage of his love of play. At first I won but small sums from him, which I

allowed him to win back again; but one evening, being very low in my finances, I urged him to hazard a considerable stake, and before the morning broke, he went home a loser of four thousand pounds. He was so goaded by this loss, as I afterwards ascertained, that he used his wife with brutal harshness, and ended by striking her.

‘ From this time I won from him considerable sums, and the result was invariably the same; his wife became the butt of his savage spleen. This continued for some time, and ended, as all such matters usually do end, in Sir Philip losing the whole of his disposable property. His estates were next mortgaged, and the money swallowed in the same gulf.

‘ One evening, after I had won from him a heavy sum, at a late hour of the night, I heard a hurried knock at the door of the house in which I lodged, and almost immediately after Lady A—— rushed into my room, with a large swelling upon her temple, and besought my protection from the brutality of her husband. He had struck her down and bruised her,—indeed, the mark on her fair brow bore sufficient testimony of the severity of his treatment. I was delighted, and received her with respectful attention. Under the excitement of the moment, she expressed herself with a tenderness towards me which I mistook for passion; but I had

by an unusual abandonment of foresight, misjudged her. She told me her miseries with an earnestness that fully showed how implicit was her confidence. She placed her hand in mine, and every now and then pressed it with her trembling fingers, as her emotions grew strong; and my heart already triumphed in the security of its victim. But how had I mistaken her. No sooner did I breathe into her chaste ear my unhallowed wishes, than she sprang from me, and withdrew her hand, with an expression of horror, as if it had been in the clutch of an adder. She did not utter a word, but quitted the apartment.

‘Strange as it may seem, I did not attempt to interrupt her progress. I imagined this to be merely a momentary exacerbation, and that she would shortly return to a more placid tone of behaviour. She was in the house, and I thought myself secure. I had, however, miscalculated both the energies and the principles of that lovely woman. In a few moments I heard the front door closed. I rushed down stairs, and discovered that Lady A—— had quitted the house. Taking my hat, I immediately ran into the street, and found she had placed herself under the protection of a watchman. I expostulated— I threatened, but equally in vain. She desired to be taken to the watch-house, whither the guardian of the night was proceeding with her. I attempted

a rescue; he sprang his rattle; and I found it advisable to make off, in order to avoid an investigation at the police-office on the morrow—a scrutiny which I well knew my character could not bear.

‘My villany was thus foiled; my prey had escaped,—and I blasphemed like a maniac. My penetration had deceived me. I cursed my stupidity, and vowed the most diabolical deeds. By the morning I had somewhat recovered from my disappointment, when a gentleman called on behalf of Sir Philip, to demand satisfaction from me for the abduction of his wife. Though I was altogether innocent of the charge, I had no manner of objection that the world should believe me guilty, for in the suspicion of my guilt that of the lady’s would be involved. I accepted the baronet’s challenge, and we met. At the first fire I shot him dead. I was taken up, underwent a trial for my life, but was, as a matter of course, acquitted. The lady told her own story, and, by all who knew her, was believed. The whole of that night on which she had escaped from my lodgings, she passed in the watch-house, under protection of the presiding officer, who was interested alike by her beauty and the simple dignity of her manners. The next day she quitted London for her father’s house. I never afterwards beheld her, but ultimately heard, to my deep mortification, that she had married a

country gentleman of good fortune, with whom she lived very happily, and whom she had blessed with an heir.

‘The mortification of disappointment, in this instance, passed off like a nine days’ wonder. But I seriously regretted having killed Sir Philip, especially when I knew that it had been the means of rendering happy the woman who had treated me, as I chose to imagine, with unmerited indignity.

‘My habits of extravagance had now become so inveterate, from the ease with which I had hitherto contrived to obtain large sums of money, that I began to find it difficult to answer the numerous demands upon me. Creditors were becoming clamorous, and friends, from whom I had borrowed, importunate, and I had not the immediate means of satisfying either. I was so well known at the gambling-houses, that few persons would engage with me in play, except those who were as great knaves as myself, and who, like myself, had nothing to lose. I was, however, obliged to do something; and, one evening, under the influence of intoxication, I abandoned my usual caution, and lost three hundred pounds. The fumes of the wine I had taken soon dissipated, and I became immediately sensible of the awkwardness of the predicament in which my heedlessness had placed me. The fellow who had won my money, I knew to be one who

would not wait for a distant day of payment, which he shortly proved, by demanding the amount due to him before I quitted the house.

‘It happened that, the preceding day, I had drawn a cheque, for four hundred pounds, in the name of a large bookseller, for whom I had been in the habit, from time to time, of performing certain literary labours. This I put into the hand of my importunate creditor, who immediately took it to the banker; and so admirably had the name been imitated, that the cheque was cashed, and I received the balance of a hundred pounds. Within a few minutes after cash had been given for the cheque, the forgery was discovered. A hue and cry was raised, and I concealed myself in the house of a friend, as he professed to be; and, in the present instance, he did not belie his profession, for the place of my retreat remained undiscovered during the few hours I continued an inmate of this insecure asylum. My person being well known, it was difficult to escape the vigilance of my pursuers; but, fortunately for me, a person, answering to the printed description of me in every particular, had been seen to take his place for Dover, at the White Bear, Piccadilly; and thither the officers, who were in quest of me, directed their course.

‘Having cut off my whiskers, eye-brows, and *mustachioes*, which I always wore; having dyed my

hair a jet-black, and tinged my naturally fair complexion with a wash which imparted a gipsy hue to my skin, and quite reversed the style of my dress, I proceeded, next morning, to the coach-office, with a halt in my gait, and took a place for Portsmouth, where I arrived that very evening, without the slightest suspicion being entertained of my identity, though hand-bills were posted in all the towns, giving a very accurate description of my person, and offering for my apprehension a reward of fifty guineas. I took part in the conversation of my fellow-passengers, who had much to say upon the audacity of the man to whom the hand-bills referred; branding him in terms of the deepest opprobrium, and recounting with indignant severity, some of the basest actions of my life. I joined in the abuse against myself with an earnestness that entirely prevented all suspicion.

On the evening of my arrival at Portsmouth, I took my passage in a vessel bound for New York; and when this matter was settled, I went to the theatre. During the performance there was a great disturbance in the house. In vain the manager came forward and entreated that the piece might be allowed to proceed: he was not listened to. The scene of anarchy was dreadful. I sprang upon the stage, and motioned to be heard. For an instant the tumult increased, but the cries of "Hear him,

hear him," prevailed, and the agitation at length subsided. With an energy that surprised even myself, I harangued the audience, put them into good humour, and the play was permitted to go on without further molestation.

'To this rash, and even reckless, exposure of myself, I attribute my escape. Had I skulked into a tavern, and avoided observation, I might have excited suspicion. As it afterwards appeared, at the very moment I was haranguing the turbulent galleries at the Portsmouth theatre, the officers who had been sent to Dover in pursuit of me, not finding me there, were on their way to Portsmouth. Fortunately, next morning, the wind being fair, the vessel in which I had taken my passage sailed. She had not left Spithead more than a few hours when my pursuers arrived; but too late to secure their victim. I was beyond their reach.

'I could scarcely repress my feelings as I gazed upon the undulating bosom of the broad Atlantic. My heart bounded in my breast as buoyantly as the billows before the prow of that gallant bark which was bearing me to the shores of another continent, where I should land with only a few pounds in my pocket, and have to seek a precarious fortune. I feared not the chance of doing well. I knew my own power. Sober as the Americans are, I was satisfied that there were some among them who

loved to hear the rattle of dice; and, therefore, I dreaded not the future.

‘After being a few days on board ship, I was anxious to reach my destination. I liked not the dull monotony of a wide expanse of waters, upon which I could see none of those, to me, beautiful varieties of circumstances, so perpetually shifting their hues, and exhibiting such changeful phases, as are seen on the more solid surface of the earth. I longed again to plunge into busy and exciting scenes. My mind was becoming torpid, and my heart sick. I was impatient to be on land.

‘At length the glorious haven was gained; the new world opened upon my eager view, exciting emotions which I pause not now to tell, and I leaped on shore a penniless and a houseless wanderer. I had not a friend under the wide canopy of heaven, but trusted to my wits to gain them; and ere a week had passed over my head, I was the oracle of a boarding-house society in the first commercial city of the new world.

‘Among these new associates I soon commenced my old system of plunder. I did not fail to win money from them all, and this without the slightest suspicion of my resorting to dishonourable practices. The ease with which I gained money, rendered me just as confident as I had been in what we are in the habit of calling the Old World, as if America

were a fresher piece of earth than either of the other continents.

‘It was not likely that I should long retain a fair character with sober people, when it was known that I subsisted by gambling. In fact, I found my society much more shunned in New York than it ever had been in London. This mortified me not a little, though it had not the slightest effect in turning me from my evil ways. In fact, I was so closely wedded to vice, that I had it not in my power to snap the strong link of union by which my soul was fettered.

‘Day after day passed on much in the same way, —until my uniform success awakened suspicion: the result was, that I was at length detected, and excluded from all communion but with the most abandoned characters of the very lowest class. My unhallowed gains were soon dissipated, and I found myself at last without a friend or a shilling; in a strange land, too, where I was never likely to redeem the reputation I had lost. My condition became desperate. I was under the necessity of performing the most menial offices. I held horses for travellers, cleaned shoes, at the corners of streets, carried parcels, and robbed when I found an opportunity.

‘This state of things, though sufficiently mortifying to my pride, was still more so to my body;

here I felt the privation bitterly. I now began to be weary of life. I had been the pampered child of luxury too long, not to feel with indescribable acuteness, the destitution to which I was reduced. Not a person of character would hold any intercourse with me; so that I was thrown among those vulgar and unintellectual criminals whom I alike despised and loathed. I again tried my old experiment of forgery, but was detected, tried, and condemned to sweep the streets with an iron collar round my neck. I underwent this disgrace without shuddering,—but the iron entered into my soul. From that instant I became a demon. Had the whole human race possessed but one head, with the feeling of the Roman emperor, I could have smitten it from the monstrous trunk, at that moment of intense hatred towards my kind, and have triumphed at the universal destruction thus produced.

‘I bore the manacle of the galled slave for eighteen heavy months, clothed in the badge of a degraded criminal, and with the coarse prison fare to subsist on. Still I nursed my life. My health did not desert me. I did not murmur, but vigilantly watched the opportunity of escape; which finally came. I broke from my chains, got secretly on board a ship, and worked my passage to England, after an absence of six years. I preferred

being hanged in my native land to being starved in America, and resolved to run the hazard of prosecution.

I landed at Liverpool a beggar. My ingenuity soon supplied me with means to clothe myself decently, and pay my fare to London. I had been almost forgotten. A new race of sharpers had sprung up at the different hells where I had been formerly known. Some, however, remained, and I was welcomed by them as an old and valuable ally. I knew my secret was not safe for a single hour, but resolved to brave all hazards, as London was the place where the richest harvest of crime was to be reaped. I soon won, as formerly, considerable sums of money; but the constant apprehension under which I lived made life a burden to me. The excitement of gambling was quite a relief to my mind, and I sought it, at length, as a positive remedy against mental depression. I was, in truth, suffering under a worse than Promethean penalty. The vulture was at my heart, and I could not tear him from his prey. Remorse stung me like a viper, but I could not crush the reptile.

The day of visitation at length came. A villain, like myself, challenged me to a game of billards for a heavy stake. I won—fairly won—when he reviled and struck me. We met the next morning. He was a practised duellist. I knew his skill, and he

also knew mine. Before the word was given, he fired,—and I fell. My pistol, happily for him, discharged while I was in the act of falling, and this chance event saved him from a halter. I shall die a murdered man.”

Thus ended this sad narrative. It fully ratified the truth,—that evil is invariably the reward of evil. The life of this unhappy man had been one of positive misery. His enjoyments were the mere intoxications of passion. His whole life had been a tissue of baseness, excitement, and crime. I had witnessed his death-bed—it was one of horror. Trace how we may the career of vicious men, this is but too generally the issue. They have no peace: there is a constant whirl and war within; for where there is no religion, there can be no happiness. Look at such men in their prosperity: they enjoy it not. Look at them in adversity: they have neither patience to bear, nor perseverance to remedy. Observe them under any aspect of the human condition, and we shall find them realizing the fine expression of the prophet:—“They are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” Being destitute of the elements of happiness, they can have no true enjoyment.

CHAPTER XVI.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE—HOW FORMED.—CHARACTER.—
DRESS.—EXPRESSION.—THE WIDOW'S ILLNESS.—MY
FIRST INTRODUCTION.—HER REQUEST.—MY FEELINGS.
—VISIT THE WIDOW.—MY RECEPTION.—ADMINISTER
THE SACRAMENT.—SHE GOES INTO DEVONSHIRE.—RE-
TURNS.—I MAKE HER AN OFFER.—SHE DECLINES IT.

ABOUT three years after I had finally settled in London, a pew was taken in the chapel to which I had been appointed as alternate preacher, by a lady, who had become an object of some curiosity in the neighbourhood. She lived in a small elegant house, near the chapel; saw no company, as it was reported, and had lately returned from New South Wales. She always wore black, though not weeds; and her dress was of the simplest kind. I should probably never have remarked her, but that I observed on the alternate Sunday mornings, when I did not preach at the chapel, she was regularly to be seen at my church in the city. This attracted my attention, after a while; and, as she was extremely constant in her attendance, I felt an anxiety to know something about her. She was an interesting looking person; not handsome, but possessing a countenance of great intelligence, though commonly suffused with an expression of melancholy. The

graceful simplicity of her dress was striking, and gave me an impression at once of a refined mind. Indeed I have often observed, that in women there is a something positively intellectual in the style of their dress. It is true; that a woman of highly-gifted mind may be an ungainly slattern; it is no less true, that a woman of a very ordinary measure of understanding may dress herself with great elegance: but, in the case of the slattern, though she possesses a strong and cultivated understanding, she will not have a refined mind; and, in the other case, a good figure, and the better taste of a fashionable milliner, will supply the absence of taste or refinement in the wearer. But you frequently see in woman, as she appears to society, with all the conventional graces of art about her, a certain unity which assimilates her with everything she wears. The appendages of costume are, as it were, identical with the person. Her dress appears part of herself, harmonizes with her mind, and is a sort of index to it. I grant that such women are a few of the rare exceptions to general rules; but they are occasionally to be met with, and such, as I afterwards found, was the fair widow of whom I been speaking. Fair, she literally was, for her skin was like snow—and it was brightened by the lustre of a pair of brilliant but soft hazel eyes, that imparted to her features at once a glory

and an expression beyond description fascinating. The beauty of her countenance consisted in its expression; for, with the exception of her eyes, she had not a single feature which would be pronounced even good; but it was the magic sympathy by which those features were blended into one harmonious whole, that gave them their peculiar charm. Every lineament united in that silent eloquence which speaks a language too pure for utterance, and addresses the soul rather than the outward ear. Hers was a beauty so little positive to the vulgar observer, that she passed with most persons who saw her as an ordinary woman—some allowing that she was good-looking, but few that she was pretty.

What I have now said of this interesting widow, I confess, I did not discover until I had become better known to her, which took place about a year after her first attendance at my church. She had, nevertheless, interested me greatly from the moment I beheld her. Her image almost haunted me; yet I forbore intruding upon her retirement, feeling that I could have no right, either positive or prescriptive, to impose my ministrations where they were not sought. At length I missed her for several successive Sundays. It occurred to me immediately that she had left town for a few weeks, to enjoy the benefit of the country air, as it happened to be the particular time of year when London dis-

gorges its masses of population into those different towns upon the sea-coast, which have of late years swelled to a prodigious size, in order to be the recipients of these human swarms. I did not choose to make any inquiries at the widow's house, being aware of her extreme reluctance to admit strangers, and fearing lest she should attribute even such a common mark of attention to an officious desire to intrude myself upon her acquaintance.

One evening a note was put into my hand, written on common Bath paper, sealed with a black seal, neatly folded and directed, in a remarkably small, delicate hand. I opened it carelessly, imagining it to be some invitation to a party, for in this way I was in the habit of receiving great attention from different members of my congregation, who were principally persons of wealth and distinction. The contents of the paper were as follows:—

‘ Mrs. ——— presents her compliments to the Reverend Mr. ———, and should take it as a great favour, if he would do her the kindness of administering the sacrament to her, at twelve o'clock, to-morrow morning. She has been confined to her bed several weeks, which has prevented her from receiving it at the usually appointed periods, in the church. She trusts this will be a sufficient apology for the present intrusion.

‘ No. —, ——— Street.’

I immediately wrote a reply, simply stating, that I should have great pleasure in attending to her request. This, however, was not written merely in accordance with the conventional forms of a well-bred courtesy, but with the greatest sincerity; for I had long felt a desire to become known to this singular woman. I cannot tell why,—I never could explain to myself why,—but certain it is that she had interested me extremely. Many women younger, more beautiful, with the advantages of a higher rank in society, were just as regular at church, and just as earnest in their public devotions; still none had hitherto excited the least interest in my bosom. I could not account for this; yet I felt the fact was so. I was anything but a romantic man; neither was I apt to be roused to strong emotions; still a new feeling seemed to rise within me whenever I thought of this almost mysterious person.

I confess I retired to rest with a strong and strange impression on my mind. It haunted my sleep; I could not dismiss it. I rose the next morning early with a fluttering pulse, and a nervous excitement of body. I longed for the appointed hour of twelve to arrive; and yet, when I thought of the interview to which I was summoned, a cold thrill passed through me. I could not at all analyze my feelings; to account for them was

utterly out of the question; as I could recall nothing to my mind that should awaken them.

The hour of twelve came, and I proceeded to the widow's house. I was ushered up stairs, into a small drawing-room, furnished with a taste which greatly confirmed my preconceived notions of the mistress of the mansion. Not a useless thing was to be seen,—and yet every object was ornamental. I am naturally an unobserving person; I never look at objects in detail, and therefore, if called upon to describe what the room contained, I should scarcely be able to enumerate anything beyond the chairs and tables. The effect of the whole arrangement, however, could not escape my attention, insensible as I generally am to matters of this kind. There was the reflex of mind in everything my eye fell upon. There was an object evident, though not intended,—an intellectual keeping in the whole arrangement.

I had not been in the room above two minutes, when I was requested to walk up stairs, and ushered into the widow's dressing-room. She was reclining upon a sofa, dressed in a white wrapper of common English dimity. On her head was a plain cambric night-cap, with a single frill, that encircled her round, pale face, and added to the soft beaming of her bright but languid eyes, as they were occasionally animated by the excitement

of conversation. She apologized for not rising as I entered, being still so weak, though gradually recovering from a severe attack of fever, that it was painful to her to remain long in an upright position. I begged she would make no apology, and expressed my satisfaction at seeing her in a state of convalescence.' She moved her head gently, in acknowledgment of my civility, for just so she regarded it, but made no reply.

I felt embarrassed. She perceived it, and said, 'I am anxious to return thanks to Almighty God, for raising me from a sick bed, and to show my sense of his mercies, by receiving the Sacrament at your hands.' This appeal to my professional character gave an impulse to my feelings that instantly turned the current of my thoughts; and I told her how happy I should be to perform a duty at once so sacred and so consoling.

The conversation now took that turn which was likely to precede the administration of so solemn a rite. I soon perceived that her knowledge of Scripture was profound, and her reading in theology extensive and varied. Our discourse lasted at least two hours before she received the Sacrament.

Her manner throughout this visit had been reserved, but not cold. Her voice had a low thrilling sweetness, which realized to my fancy that whispering of angels to children in sleep, so beautifully

conceived and preserved among the national superstitions of Ireland. Amid all her elegance of mind and of manners, there was an utter absence of art in everything she said or did. I was extremely gratified by the interview.

From this time I saw her at certain intervals. Her recovery was so slow, that she herself apprehended her end to be drawing near: I, therefore, prayed with her frequently. She was at length recommended change of air, as the only chance of restoring her. She accordingly went into Devonshire, and, for upwards of four months, I neither saw nor heard anything of her.

Just before Christmas, Mrs. ——— returned to her small elegant house in town, completely recruited in health. I called a few days after. She received me in the drawing-room, with her usual reserve, and heard my congratulations with a bow; then diverted the conversation to a different theme. After a short visit, I expressed a hope to be allowed the honour of occasionally calling.

‘It has been my habit, since my return from abroad, to live almost entirely alone: in fact, I have long desired to see no one, save the members of my establishment; for mine, sir, is not a mind that seeks its enjoyments in the active recreations of life. As my pastor, I can have no objection to be favoured with your occasional visits, as I trust my

soul's interests would be likely to be advanced by such an intercourse with one whom I have now for some time looked up to as my spiritual director.'

'I am flattered, madam, by your permission, and the more flattered, since I have had the good fortune to obtain your favourable opinion.'

'Professionally,' she replied, with a slight emphasis, 'you have obtained it; but having had the honour of so slight a personal acquaintance with you, I am unwilling to be supposed to form an opinion, except upon tangible and justifiable grounds. I have certainly derived both gratification and instruction from your exertions in that ministry, in which I have no doubt you will prove an efficient and valuable member.'

There was something in her conversation constrained and formal, and I replied only by a bow. Appearing to feel that she had mixed up with her last observations less of urbanity than was her wont, she made some commonplace remarks upon matters which I do not now remember, and I took my leave.

In spite of the dignity with which the sacred character of my profession invested me, I felt abashed in the presence of that singular woman. Whenever I visited her, I always found her manners the same in kind, though not in degree. Her reserve gradually abated; still I could never

trace the slightest approach even to that familiarity generally admitted in social intercourse. I plainly perceived that her mind was not quite at ease. Young as she evidently was, for her age did not exceed thirty, it is not likely that any of the ordinary accidents of life would have so warped her woman's nature, as to contract her into all but a recluse. She never adverted, in any way, to the cause of her love of solitude. Her conversation, though never gloomy, was always grave; nor did she, by any means, confine it to religious topics, though these were frequently the subjects upon which her mind loved to ponder. Every visit which I paid to Mrs. ———, only increased my desire to repeat it; and, before I was well aware, it came home to my conviction almost with the shock of some great unexpected convulsion, that I loved her. I could not delude myself,—my heart pleaded guilty to the conviction.

Rumours soon began to prevail that I was paying my addresses to the secluded widow. This distressed me exceedingly, as I was fearful how it might operate upon a mind so sensitive as hers; but it appeared to produce no impression. The reports must have reached her ear, yet she seemed to disregard them altogether. The unsullied dignity of her feelings kept her above the influence of such vulgar provocatives to annoyance. There

was not the slightest alteration in her manner towards me, which had never approached to anything like social familiarity: still she always gave me to suppose that my society was agreeable to her.

My visits, in this way, continued for several months with little or no variation. I had not yet declared myself, but determined to do so, as the report of my attentions to the widow were becoming daily more and more prevalent. I made my sentiments known to her by letter. Her reply was characteristic.

‘Mrs. —— regrets that she cannot entertain Mr. ——’s proposal. She has determined never again to marry; but hopes, nevertheless, this will not deprive her of the occasional pleasure of his society, as usual.’

I was mortified at this refusal; the more so as there was so little feeling expressed. There was a mystery in the character of this interesting being which I could not penetrate. In spite of her gentle but cold rejection of me, my soul clung to her image with a fervour which I began to feel to be criminal, and tried to repress. The struggle was great, yet I in part prevailed. For many days I did not see her—I believe for nearly a fortnight; but by this time my mortification had somewhat subsided, and I renewed my visits.

Upon entering the room in which she was seated

on a low ottoman, she rose with unusual quickness, her countenance glowing with a tender earnestness I had never before observed, and extended her hand. I placed mine within it, bowing somewhat distantly at the same time ; and she said—

‘My dear sir, I hope you have thought me neither cruel nor unkind, in declining the honour of so flattering an alliance as that with which you have proposed to honour me. I have a vow in heaven which cannot be broken. Believe me, I esteem you highly ; but there are reasons why I cannot marry you.’

‘My dear madam,’ I replied, with subdued emotion, ‘if there really are reasons, which you judge to be a positive bar to my happiness, I can have no right to urge you further. I must learn to bear my disappointment with patience, though I cannot do so without regret. Still, after what has passed, I feel it necessary, for my own peace of mind, that I should cease to visit you.’

‘As you please ; but favour me with your company to-morrow at twelve, and I will endeavour to convince you that my rejection was not guided by caprice. I owe it to your kind and truly liberal feeling towards me, to disclose why I have declined becoming united to you by the nearest and dearest of all ties.’

I promised to call on the following morning, and took my leave.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WIDOW'S HISTORY.—HER FAMILY.—HER FATHER'S DEATH.—SHE BECOMES A NURSERY GOVERNESS.—LADY H.—YOUNG LORD —.—HIS APPROACHES—REPULSED.—THE FATHER'S ACCUSATION.—QUITS THE EARL'S MANSION.—ACCUSED OF THEFT.—EXAMINED.—COMMITTED TO NEWGATE FOR TRIAL.—FOUND GUILTY.—CONDEMNED TO BE TRANSPORTED FOR FOURTEEN YEARS.—SAILS FOR NEW HOLLAND.

THE next day, after the usual formal salutations had passed between us, and I was seated in her little drawing room, she said, 'Now, my dear sir, I will show you at least that you possess my confidence. After what has passed, I have made up my mind to tell you the somewhat strange history of my life. This is due to you; and when you have heard it, my motive for declining your generous proposal will be sufficiently obvious.

'My father was land-steward to a nobleman, from whom he received a handsome income; but, being a man of extravagant habits, he died when I had reached my fourteenth year, and I was left the eldest of four children. My mother was immediately put into one of the porters' lodges, at the main avenue of the park, and I was taken into the house as a sort of nursery companion and lady's-maid to the younger female children.

‘I had been well educated. Being naturally quick, I had availed myself of the advantages which my father’s partiality had procured for me, and might really be called an accomplished girl. The change of condition was saddening to my ambitious spirit; and, though I submitted with tolerable acquiescence to such a complete reverse, it became, nevertheless, evident that I was uneasy under the yoke of servitude. I did not sufficiently feel the disparity between myself and those whom I was appointed to serve. This was occasionally hinted to me in a way that made my heart heave. The young ladies often brought to my recollection that I was their servant, and this stung me bitterly. Still I neither practised nor expressed rebellion; but it was perceived that I was not happy in, or resigned to, my present situation. I could not help being conscious of my own natural and acquired superiority over those of whom I was the servile companion,—and had malice enough to show it whenever an opportunity occurred.

‘Lady H—— was a weak woman, without energy, either bodily or intellectual; foolishly indulgent to her children, and intolerant of those who thwarted them in the slightest particular. But then, her husband was an Irish earl, with an income of forty thousand a year: she was, therefore, privileged to be everything she pleased; and it was her pleasure

to be a trifling, heartless puppet, whose chief delight consisted in hearing her girls called *my lady*, and in seeing herself worshipped as a something more than woman, in the palpable form of a peer's wife. Her lord was a swearing, swaggering, coarse sort of man; —in intellect below mediocrity, and in manners any thing but a gentleman.

‘He had frequently spoken to me in a harsh tone of rebuke, which so deeply offended my pride, that he became my aversion, and his house my purgatory. I at length determined to quit it, but knew not to what sort of employment I should address myself for a living.

‘About this time Lord H——’s eldest boy returned from Oxford. He was a tall gawky youth, in his twentieth year, with a tawny complexion and thin flaxen hair, protruding teeth, and a tongue so big as sadly to mar his articulation. As this scion of an aristocratic house was frequently with his sisters, I saw a good deal of him, and, to say the truth, he was very civil to me, without being either rude or arrogant. When he made his sisters a present, something was always offered to me, but I invariably declined it.

‘After a while, his attentions to me became less equivocal, and began to be disagreeable. My soul spurned at the idea of such a man harbouring a *thought* hostile to my purity, and I received his

advances with expressions of disapprobation not to be misunderstood. He seemed surprised at my warmth, but forbore to repeat what he saw had given me offence.

‘My sentiments towards this young man were those of perfect indifference. I considered him a harmless creature, having the inclination, though not the spirit, to be deliberately wicked, and that he was innocuous, therefore, from fear rather than from principle. Still he was harmless, and I tolerated his presence, even when it was disagreeable to me. He did not at all resent the manner in which I had put a stop to his growing attentions, but offered me many little civilities in a manner that I could not rebuke, but which I, nevertheless, suffered to pass without acknowledgment.

‘I perceived that his sisters relished not the manifest partiality with which he viewed me. Their manner grew colder and more rigid. I was made less their companion than I had been accustomed to be, and was discarded altogether from their confidence. This did not greatly move me, for I neither loved nor respected them; and they did me a kindness, of which they were indeed ignorant, by leaving me so much more to the companionship of my own thoughts. I was still with them every day, and, consequently, saw their brother frequently: he always appeared very happy when I was by,

often exercising his huge tongue with an energy, which, if it proved his gift of speech, by no means proved his eloquence.

‘ I had a little room, adjoining that of the ladies, appropriated exclusively to my own privacy. One morning, while sitting alone in this chamber, I was startled by the entrance of young Lord —— . He apologised for intruding. I rose, as a hint that I did not desire him to be seated, and, observing me redden, he immediately unfolded to me the purpose of his visit—which was no less than to declare his passion for me, and make me an offer of his hand. I smiled at the proposal, pointed out the impossibility of my becoming legally united to the heir of an earldom, whilst he was a minor, and civilly declined the intended honour. He was evidently chagrined, and made an effort to expostulate. I, however, cut the matter short, by a respectful but peremptory refusal.

‘ Shortly after this I, was accused by the earl of having attempted to seduce the affections of his son. I repelled the charge with indignation, and was desired immediately to quit the house. I must do Lord —— the justice to say, that he came forward in my defence, and exonerated me from any attempt upon his heart ; but the father was inexorable, and I was desired to seek another abode. I prepared to obey, without the slightest reluctance, though I knew

not where in the world to look for a home. The family was in London, where I had not a single acquaintance.

‘I quitted the earl’s mansion, and took a lodging at the house of a green-grocer, who served the family. My boxes were sent for the next morning, when to my surprise, my keys were demanded, in order that the trunks and packages might be searched before the messenger would be permitted to take them. Surprised at such a requisition, I repaired to —— Place, to ascertain the reason of so unusual a demand. Upon inquiry, I found that several of Lady ——’s trinkets had been missed, and, from something that the house-maid had said, with whom I had long been upon the worst terms, I was suspected of having taken them. Conscious of my own innocence, I readily produced my keys. I perceived a smile of triumph upon the lip of my accuser as the little instrument was fitted into the lock. The box was opened, and, to my unspeakable amazement, two rings and a brooch were found in a corner of one of my trunks, wrapped in a piece of silver paper.

‘I stood before the party unable to utter a word. I was stunned by the surprise. An officer was sent for, into whose custody I was committed, and sent to the police-office for examination. The evidence against me was not to be denied. The trinkets

had been found in my trunk. I could only protest to not having placed them there, but could produce no proof of my innocence. I shrank from the degradation to which I was subjected. To be exhibited as a thief to the gaze of the crowd in a public office,—exposed to the vulgar sarcasms of an unfeeling rabble,—and adjudged guilty of a crime from which my very soul recoiled,—was more than I could bear. My heart sickened. I fainted; and when I recovered, found myself in a hackney-coach between two strange men. The truth was soon told. I had been committed on a charge of felony, and was on my way to Newgate, to take my trial.

‘I uttered not a word, but sat silent and confounded. Could it be possible?—I was to be cast among common felons, and brought up before a jury of my country to be tried for an offence that might affect my life. There was no evading the disgrace. When the coach stopped at the prison door, I was given over to the charge of the governor, who put me into a small room, occupied by two women, committed for trial upon accusations of a similar nature. My heart sank within me at the bare idea of being the companion of criminals; but there was no choice for me.

‘I was now in a common prison,—the companion of the most degraded among my fellow-beings,—about to be tried for my life,—perhaps hanged;

and if I escaped a halter, without doubt to be transported. My feelings, at this terrible moment, cannot be coloured by description up to their true hues of sadness. I felt as if I had a scorpion within my bosom, full of vigorous life, and that I was under one perpetual infliction of its sting. The consciousness of innocence, and my indelible abhorrence of anything in the shape of dishonour, (for this had always been a strong bias of my nature,) made me shrink with horror from the degradation to which I was thus wantonly exposed. I threw myself upon a seat, and wept; I could willingly have suffered death at the moment, by the hand of Him who looks through man's little life, and directs the hour when he shall yield it up into the hands of the Giver; but to be brought to trial before a public tribunal, was to me at once a disgust and a loathing. I shrank within myself, and trembled from excess of mental agony. The certainty of conviction stared me in the face, for I had no evidence to bring forward to rebut the odious charge upon which I had been arraigned.

‘How my soul sickened! One of my female companions was a young woman, about my own age, respectable in appearance, as far as her condition of life was concerned, but, in every other respect, a living representative of reckless profligacy.

She had been committed for shop-lifting, a system of plunder which she had practised for years, with astonishing success. As she had always looked forward to detection, some time or other, when the consummation came, she was prepared for it, and therefore felt no shock. She talked of her guilt with an unseemly flippancy, that rendered her approach to me a positive infliction. She laughed and sung, as if her present condition were a pastime, and she had nothing to fear in the issue of her trial. Though young, she had the indelible seal of licentiousness upon her.

‘ My other companion was an elderly woman, who had been sent to prison for pawning some trifling articles of furniture belonging to the landlord of a miserable lodging, in a low street, near St. Giles’s. This woman told her tale of guilt with a quivering countenance. The calls of hunger had urged her to the commission of a deed which even starvation cannot palliate in the eye of the law. Some charitable person had paid for the accommodation which she enjoyed in common with myself and the other female criminal. There was a complete contrast between them: the one was old and penitent,—the other young and reckless. I had little conversation with either. My own thoughts were sufficient to engross my whole atten-

tion. I had scarcely room for any sympathy; my own case appeared so immeasurably harder even than that of my aged companion.

‘Day after day passed on, but there was no change in the scene before me, and its horrible monotony almost drove me mad. My brain burned, my throat swelled, my blood leaped through me,—and I was soon laid upon a sick bed. For three weeks my life was despaired of; but I recovered only to the reality of a condition that seared my very soul, and of a disgrace that will cling to me for the rest of my days.

‘The trial at length came on. I need not detail it. My crime was stated, and witnesses brought forward to prove that the missing trinkets were discovered concealed in my trunk. I was found guilty, and condemned to be transported for fourteen years. The solemn monotonous voice of the judge, as he pronounced sentence upon me, still rings in my ears. Never shall I forget the horrors of that day. There are sufferings which we wonder we can support and live. A deadly sickness came over me, and the very food I ate seemed to turn to gall. The whole mass of my flesh appeared converted into quicksilver, quivering in every fibre, and pressing upon my over-loaded heart with the weight of a mountain. Not a tear trickled from my eyes; their sockets were scorched like a fur-

nace; the moment the relief came, it was dried up, and the fever of my agony remained unassuaged.

‘ I was shortly put on board ship with a party of convicts. The scene was dreadful. I was mixed with the vilest of my sex, who derided my silence, and mocked at what they called my pretended innocence. There was no shunning the contact of these women, and I felt the pollution like a plague blast. Their ribaldry, their indecency, their execrations disgusted and appalled me. Still there was no escape: I was linked to my destiny by too strong a manacle to be separated by the frail efforts of an inexperienced woman.

After a short time I became, in some degree reconciled to my condition, dreadful though it was; for there is no draught from the cup of misery so bitter, but it may be swallowed, with complacency at least, if not without a fierce recoil of heart. During the passage I occasionally fell into conversation with one of the female convicts. She was a young creature, seduced, by a villian who courted her, to rob her mistress. Her love got the better of her discretion, and she was now paying the penalty of her folly. I found her an artless, rather than a vicious girl; very ignorant, but very tractable. She daily sought my side. She liked my conversation, which I was glad to give her the benefit of, as it withdrew her from the society of

her more depraved companions, and to a certain degree, prevented the influence of vicious example upon her extremely governable mind.

‘ By the time we had reached our destination I had settled down into a gloomy resignation to my fate. I did not at first resort to religion, which would have kept my spirit buoyant upon the wings of a holy hope, in this sad hour of my need ; but I leaned upon the weaker support of my reason, and found it a feeble and insufficient prop. Reflection, however, brought the dove of comfort to my soul. The aspirations of devotion finally breathed from it, and I became a new being. My resignation was at length complete. Though I felt humbled—degraded—I acknowledged the affliction to be merited from God, but not from man ; and thenceforward a murmur never escaped my lips.’

CHAPTER XVIII.

PORT JACKSON.—THE WIDOW'S OCCUPATION.—CONTRIBUTES TO A NEWSPAPER.—HER SUCCESS.—MR. ———.—REVERSAL OF THE SENTENCE.—LADY H——'S GENEROSITY.—THE UNION.—ITS RESULT.—SHE IS LEFT A WIDOW.—RETURNS TO ENGLAND.—HER SECLUSION.—THE SEPARATION.

‘WE were at length landed at Port Jackson. A thrill of inexplicable emotion passed through me, as I descended the side of the ship, to be conveyed to the scene of my future destination. In a few months after my arrival, I raised myself above the degraded level of those who had been the companions of my voyage. My accomplishments gave me an advantage in this growing colony, which I soon turned to account. I was a perfect mistress of music; drew with considerable promptitude; spoke Italian and French with fluency;—qualifications not readily found at Port Jackson. I gained more than a competency in giving lessons, and afforded such satisfaction, that I had soon a greater number of pupils than I could conveniently attend to.

‘I now made money. My conduct since my arrival had been irreproachable, and I found myself so generally respected, that I was soon enabled to *increase* the amount of my terms for tuition. My

own story of the charge upon which I had been sentenced to transportation was at length received with implicit credit, and I was generally considered the innocent victim of evil machinations.

‘ My occupation tended to restore the tone of my mind. I had little time to dwell upon the gloomy events of the past, and the future was sufficiently promising. It was a consolation to me to perceive that, in the land to which I had been exiled upon a charge of the greatest moral enormity, I was treated not only with respect, but my society was courted, and my talents extolled. This naturally flattered me, and spurred me to greater exertions.

‘ I frequently contributed to the columns of a newspaper, established by a person under circumstances very similar to mine. He had been transported upon a charge of forgery, and his innocence was discovered just when six years of the period for which he was condemned had transpired ; but he preferred living in the country where he was now settled, and making money, to returning to a home where disgrace might still point at him the finger of scorn, and malice stamp upon his character the opprobrium of unmerited shame. The second year after his arrival, he established, at Port Jackson, a paper, which met with such success, that it soon brought him an excellent income. He was still a young man, in his thirty-sixth year.

After his innocence had been declared, and his pardon proclaimed, his society was courted by the first people in the colony. He proved to be a person of good talents, and showed great discretion in conducting his journal.

‘ I occasionally sent him short articles, which were gladly received and inserted. As my initials always appeared to those articles, it was soon known by whom they were written, and my talents were still more extolled. My life might be now considered one of unbroken prosperity. I earned money rapidly, and was amassing a comfortable income. The first year I put by four hundred pounds, and by the end of the fourth, I was worth upwards of two thousand. I had now nothing to repine at.

‘ My contributions to the newspaper brought me in contact with its editor. I found him a mild gentlemanly man, and our confidence increased with our literary intercourse. He believed me to be innocent of the crime for which I had been condemned, and his sympathy towards me was no doubt stronger from having similarly suffered. I was pleased with his good opinion, and he seemed no less pleased with mine. Mine had been a difficult and dangerous position. Thrown among the most profligate of my sex, an outcast from my country, degraded under the sentence of its laws, I *had* still not suffered the contact of pollution to

taint the principle of virtue, which was ever strong within me. I had elevated myself, from the deepest moral debasement, to a respectable position in society ; and though the brand of infamy remained still upon me, I had come out of the furnace of affliction spiritually purified, though legally degraded.

‘ Our literary intercourse, which brought us a good deal together, had continued upwards of a year, when Mr. ——— made me an offer of his hand. I was taken by surprise: I never once entertained a suspicion that our friendship was likely to lead to such an issue. It was indeed natural enough, but the thought had not for an instant occurred to me, and I felt painfully embarrassed. He was an innocent man, proved innocent, absolved from guilt, by the very laws which had condemned him, while I was still a criminal—still under the odium of a crime which I could not think of without a harrowing pang. I was distressed by his proposal, because I foresaw that it would force me to give him pain, for I was determined never to go a degraded thing to the arms of a husband. While I continued single, the glowing spot of infamy by which I was encircled, surrounded only myself; the moment I united myself in the sacred bands of marriage, I should draw the man partaking of this union within the same sphere of moral pollution.

Why should I spread the blight of contagion upon another? No! I acknowledged the generous preference with which he flattered me, but peremptorily declined his proposal.

‘He urged the respect which was entertained for my character in the colony, the general opinion of my innocence, and implored me, unless my heart were decidedly opposed to a union with him, to make him happy.

‘I was not to be moved. My principles were too fixed to wander, when once it had become the settled conviction of my soul that I was acting rightly. I felt myself bound not to involve another in the shame, however unmerited, which had so unhappily fallen upon me.

‘About this time an unexpected event occurred. A remission of my sentence arrived from England, and I was no longer a convict; yet it imparted no triumph to my heart. That had been seared, and the cicatrice was not to be eradicated. If the wound was healed, a deep unsightly scar remained, and I never could forget having suffered transportation for robbery. My innocence, indeed, had ever been a solace to me. It was known to my God, in whose sight, and in communion with him, I enjoyed the consciousness of it, with a lofty sense of devotion. But in the eye of the world, a canker had been upon me, and even though the canker was

removed, the foul dark spot remained, which nothing could expunge. It was, however, a satisfaction to me that my innocence had been proclaimed, though the stain left upon my name was not to be effaced.

‘ By the same ship which conveyed my liberty, I received a letter from my mother, fully detailing the singular revelation of my innocence. It was as follows:—The house-maid who had suggested the search of my things, when I quitted the service of Lord H——, was taken suddenly ill. The terrors of death overcame her, and stung by remorse, she sent for my mother, to whom she declared that she had herself placed the trinkets in my trunk, in order to fix the guilt of robbery upon me, for whom she entertained a violent antipathy. The girl recovered, but her conscience had been so severely probed, that she maintained the truth of her statement. She was dismissed from her service, and I restored to freedom. To my mother, who had quitted the lodge in the Earl of H——'s park immediately upon my conviction, his noble lady sent a ten-pound note, by way of compensation for the injury I had sustained in being sentenced to fourteen years' transportation, under a false sentence,—but the expected beneficiary had the spirit to return it.

‘ No sooner was I placed on the same footing

with himself, than my generous friend again proposed to marry me; observing, that the objection which had directed my former determination, could now no longer exist. This was true; nevertheless, I still had some difficulty in acceding to his wishes. I was indeed declared to be innocent, but I had paid the degrading penalty of guilt. I had placed myself in a comfortable independence as a single woman, and was, comparatively, happy; why, then, should I alter my condition, upon the chance of not improving it? He, however, continually urged me with the tenderest importunities; and I at length consented. He had already accumulated more than a competency, which he justly considered our united exertions would much augment.

‘ We were united just as I had attained my twenty-fourth year. Our union was a happy one. He was the kindest of husbands, and used in his fondness to say, that I was the best of wives. We had no children; a circumstance, to my mind, not to be regretted,—as their names would have been ever coupled with the legal expulsion of their parents from home and country. By our united endeavours the property of the paper greatly increased.

‘ We were five years married, and during the whole of that period, to the best of my recollection,

we never exchanged one unkind word. The chastenings with which we had each been visited, tamed the rebellious spirit, and wore down the edge of our passions. We had both been improved by what in many is a great source of moral mischief. Our society was everywhere courted. We were invited to the governor's table; he visited us at our own, and we could hardly be said to have a wish ungratified. But this cloudless state of things could not last. The course of human events must have its interruptions, or we shall pass through no probation. The sky lowered, at length, and the gloom of desolation visited our dwelling. My husband died, after a short illness of three days. This was indeed a severe shock to my feelings; but they had endured heavier trials, and I was therefore able to bear it with that fortitude with which the unfortunate are ever familiar. My loss was great; for I was once more left alone in the world. He had been an excellent husband, and an endeared friend. I mourned for him with a deep and enduring sorrow. I was, however, satisfied that his change from time to eternity was one from corruption to incorruption. His harvest was reaped in Heaven. He had gone to his inheritance, where, I trust, once more to join him, when the frail thread of existence shall be snapt, and I shall be laid in the grave, in

a land remote from that in which his ashes were deposited.

‘ His death left me a widow, with twenty-four thousand pounds. My hand was almost immediately sought; but I appreciated the motive, and rejected with silent scorn several interested suitors. When the year of my widowhood had expired, I returned to England.

‘ It was not without regret that I quitted a country to which I was sent under such evil auspices, but, nevertheless, in which I had enjoyed much true happiness, and stored up the elements for future enjoyment in that country where it is for evermore,—“Where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.” I quitted it, however, and arrived in England just two years since. I have secluded myself from society, because I do not choose to expose myself to the risk of those mortifications which none can escape from, when they court communion with the great and the gay, upon whose name the brand of obloquy has once fallen. Seclusion is now so completely my habit, that society would be to me a penance. I avoid it, therefore, because it would furnish no enjoyment to me.

‘ Now, sir, you have the little history of my life; and from it you will probably understand why I have declined the honour of your hand. I cannot

help feeling that I am still a degraded woman in the eye of the world; and not for the wealth of that world would I involve unspotted name, and especially that of a clergyman, in the odium which, to a certain extent, must ever attach to mine.'

She ceased; and, extending to me her trembling hand, a tear glistened in her bright dark eye.

'I appreciate your motives, dear madam,' I said, 'and honour you for them. But who would dare to breathe a calumny upon an innocent woman, and that woman the wife of a clergyman? The more your history became known, the more you would be honoured.'

'No, sir, the more I should be pitied; and how frequently is the pity of the multitude allied to contempt? I would not have my history known. I do not desire the world's pity, neither would I provoke its scorn;—I shrink from both. I desire to live unknown, unnoticed, unpitied, but not despised. Your good opinion of me is a watered spot in the wilderness of my being, through which my mind loves to wander, and prepare itself for Heaven.'

'But it appears to me that this love of seclusion is not a feeling altogether to be approved. You cheat yourself with an illusion: for while you imagine you are preparing your soul for its ulti-

mate destination, are you not withdrawing yourself from those social duties, which, by the fiat of the moral law, are as imperative as our duties towards God? In fact, they are the same thing, alike indispensable and indivisible: since, by performing our duties to the creature, in that very act of subserviency to the divine precept, we perform our duty to the Creator.'

'But surely, the great Author of Mercy expects from us nothing beyond our means. The services he requires are relative, as will be seen by the parable of the talents. He who had only five, was rewarded equally with him who had ten, because he had been no less observant to his trust than the other; for though he returned less, as his means had been less, he was equally accepted.'

'But you will remember,' said I, 'that the one talent, which was not appropriated, brought disgrace and shame upon the servant who had laid it by, and he was rejected.'

'Yet I trust,' said she, mournfully, 'that I am not altogether an unprofitable servant. The salvation of my own soul is a work of no common interest and difficulty; and if I labour to restore that back pure to the God who gave it, I feel I shall not have laboured in vain.'

Our conversation was continued for some time; but I could not bring her to the belief that she was

at all called upon to appear in the world. She had a firm and settled opinion upon that point, which nothing could shake. I confess I honoured the severe dignity of her mind, though the discovery of her character,—her inflexible virtue,—made my regret the deeper that I could never be joined to her by a more endearing link of union. We parted for the last time. I never saw her again, except at church, whither she constantly came. Indeed, I was conscious it would be more than weakness to seek the presence of a woman, towards whom I felt too strongly to meet her without emotion. She is still alive. Four years have since passed, but we have never once met.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. C——.—HIS CHARACTER.—STRANGE MALADY.—HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS.—A LOVER OF LITERATURE.—THE QUALITY OF HIS MIND.—HIS SCEPTICISM.—MY RECEPTION.—IMPRESSION CAUSED BY THE INTERVIEW.—REPEAT MY VISIT.—HYPOCHONDRIASIS.—STRANGE IMPRESSION.—UNSETTLED BELIEF.

ONE morning, shortly after I had taken my breakfast, word was brought to me by the servant that a lady desired the favour of a few minutes' conversation with me. Miss C—— was printed upon the card, in a small Italian text. I desired the lady might be admitted. A fashionable looking woman immediately entered the room, and after apologizing for intruding upon me at so early an hour, said it was the anxious wish of her family that I should see her brother, who was singularly afflicted, and who, they were apprehensive, was slowly but gradually dying. I inquired the nature of his complaint, at which she seemed somewhat embarrassed,—telling me simply, she believed it arose from an extremely shattered state of nerves, but, from his daily wasting, they began to entertain fears for his life.

‘Pardon, me madam,’ said I; ‘but I am sure you will not imagine me guided by idle curiosity, when I ask, what are his general habits?’

‘Not in the least; and so far as I can reply to your question I shall do so implicitly. We have always considered him a man of the highest moral principles, with a turn of mind, not what might be decidedly called religious, in the strictest sense of the word, but, nevertheless, imbued with sentiments of the profoundest devotion to God, and of charity towards man.’

‘Perhaps, as your character of him, in a religious point of view, is rather vague, the root of his disease may be sought in a want of true and earnest religious feeling, or at all events, in this may be found his cure.’

‘You will, no doubt, sir, soon discover the cause of his malady, in your intercourse with him. It is one to him, poor fellow, of an extremely distressing nature. I had, however, much rather you should learn his secret from himself, than from me.’

‘But, probably, if I were prepared, by knowing the exact cause of his sufferings I might be better able to supply the remedy.’

‘Sir,’ she replied, with great truth, ‘religion is a cure for all diseases; the application of the remedy is the great difficulty: but no one can administer the balm of spiritual comfort like one of God’s ministers. They come to the sick man, under the solemn sanction of Him whose mercies are over all his works, and they always appear as a medium of communication between man and

his God. I confess it strikes me forcibly, that my poor brother has not that fixed reliance upon salvation, through a crucified Saviour which he ought to have. In all his conversations with me upon the subject of futurity, he has invariably generalized more than appears to me consistent with a fervid faith. You will be the best judge. We all rely upon the best consequences from your seeing him occasionally. He has never yet received the sacrament; perhaps you might suggest to him that he should do so.'

'I will, I replied;' and having promised to visit her brother in the course of that evening, the lady withdrew.

In the evening, according to my promise, I went to —— street, —— square, for the purpose of being introduced to the person whose spiritual physician I was expected to prove. I was shown into the front drawing-room; the door of the back room being open, I observed Mr. C——, lying upon a couch, with his head towards the door, so that he did not perceive my entrance. As I approached the couch, I heard him talking, as I supposed, to some person in the apartment; but when I entered, it became evident that he was alone. His conversation, for such it seemed, was so fluent and earnest, that I could scarcely be persuaded there was no interlocutor, until I reached his side. Even when he saw me, he did not cease

for, perhaps, two minutes, but spoke precisely as if he were carrying on a dialogue with some one. I did not disturb him.

After a short interval, he raised himself, and his sister introduced me as the Reverend Mr. —. He immediately rose, and apologized for his seeming inattention. ‘But, my dear sir,’ said he, ‘I am subject to an infirmity which, after you have known me better, I trust you will forgive. I am not, I hope, naturally an uncourteous man; but I have a somewhat strange distemper, if that may be so called which exists in the mind rather than in the body; my physician terms it, a something unusual in my temperament, and it renders me sometimes apparently rude, when I really mean to be the reverse.’

This was uttered in a mild, but fervent tone. I seated myself by his side. There was a pause of some minutes. While his sister gave him a draught which had been prescribed for him, I had leisure to examine his countenance: this was singularly striking. He seemed about forty years of age; but it was the intellectual character of his head, rather than any physical indication, that gave him the appearance of being so old. From the smooth broad forehead, large beaming eyes, and round fresh-coloured lips, he might have passed for a much younger man; but, as I afterwards ascer-

tained, he was in his one-and-fortieth year. He was by no means a handsome man, according to the general formula by which beauty is defined, but his countenance was intellectually beautiful. The soul peeped through the skin at every curvature of the countenance, and spoke with voiceless eloquence in a thousand varied articulations, (if I may so call them), of silent but radiant expression. The moment I saw him he excited a deep interest within me, for he was altogether the most singularly interesting man with whom I had ever conversed. He was pale, but not thin, though he had the feeble and relaxed air of an invalid.

In the course of our first conversation, I soon discovered that he was familiarly acquainted with books—that he had studied deeply, though his mind sought repose rather in the speculative than the true. This opinion was fully confirmed upon my further acquaintance with him. He possessed an imaginative spirit, but it was never satisfied. It was perpetually in a state of vibration—never at rest. It lacked solidity, but not power: yet, what it had of the latter quality was more the power of impulse than of sober deliberative thinking. He was indeed with a quick, rapid, intuitive, but not a grasping intellect. It wanted sense: it displayed immense penetration, yet was without depth. Though it had the clear brilliancy, it had likewise

the thinness of the speculum. He was not a superficial man, so far as knowledge was concerned, for he had studied much, and consequently knew much; but he applied his knowledge superficially. He wanted concentration, and was too much in the habit of diffusing what he knew, so that it spread widely: the further, however, it went, the weaker it became. He was a specious man,—of very brilliant elocution,—and had a truly surprising power of riveting the attention. I never listened to him without delight, and seldom without feeling myself wiser.

In our first interview, little passed worth recording. He told me, that he was in an unhappy state of mind, which rendered him at times so depressed, that he prayed for death as a release from the intense agony of his thoughts.

‘I apprehend,’ said I, ‘that you are labouring under some strange nervous excitement; for, as I entered the room, you were talking to yourself with an earnestness that made me imagine you had a companion.’ He smiled languidly. ‘You have partly guessed my infirmity, of which you may know more when we become better acquainted. I am anxious to avail myself of the conversation of a man with whom I can exchange thoughts to my own profit; and this is not the case in our common

standing was stored. When I rose to take my leave, he strongly pressed me to repeat my visit on an early day.

The interview with Mr. C——, produced a strong impression upon me. I felt apprehensive that, with such a sagacious and penetrating intellect, I should have insuperable difficulties to encounter in producing right impressions of Religion, provided those he had hitherto entertained were wrong. He was evidently not in the habit of taking any thing for granted, and the love of speculation to which he seemed decidedly prone, led me to suspect that he was more likely to compound a religion for himself in the crucible of his own mind, than receive it already prepared from that well of salvation, the Gospel, promulgated by Divine Wisdom. My suspicions upon this point were strengthened by what his sister had said to me in our interview previously to my visit.

I repeated my call the third day after my first interview, and found him in a state of extreme dejection. He was evidently labouring under a paroxysm of hypochondriasis. Upon asking him how he felt—

‘Hush!’ said he, with a deep contraction of the brow, that almost buried his penetrating eyes beneath the depressed lids,—‘they forbade my telling you; but, sir, ’tis of no use: I must—’

you the depository of my secret. I am a miserable tea-pot.'

'A miserable what?' I asked, supposing my ears must have deceived me.

'A miserable tea-pot, sir, which is punished twice a day to gratify the luxuries of this unfeeling family. Shame, shame! Morning and evening is the scalding infusion made within this metallic frame, until the very flies refuse to pitch upon it, lest they should scorch their tiny limbs; and I feel within as hot as a caldron. 'Tis abominable!'

'But, my dear sir,' said I, perceiving now that he was labouring under partial aberration of mind, 'there is nothing metallic in your frame. Believe me, it is all pure flesh and blood.'

'Who ever heard,' he cried, with some vehemence, 'of the spout of a tea-pot being flesh and blood?'—at the same time, extending and curving his right arm, and bending his left over his side, placing the hand upon his hip, so as to represent the spout and handle of the utensil into which he imagined himself metamorphosed. The action was altogether so ludicrous, that I could not forbear a smile.

'I have suffered, sir,' he continued, 'during the period of my metempsychosis, the torments of the doomed. Though I am a tea-pot, could they not hang me up as a kitchen ornament, without sub-

jecting me to the daily purgatory of making my sentient frame a receptacle for that scalding Chinese compound called tea?—which is nothing better than a boiled weed; in short, a hot, exco-riating poison.’

This ebullition soon subsided, and I found him perfectly rational, though now and then he appeared to answer an interrogation as if there were a third speaker present. Having gradually led him to the question, as he had been speaking upon the excellence of certain authors, I asked him if he thought any human work equal, even as a composition, to the Bible.

‘None, certainly.’

‘But what is your opinion of it as a divine oracle?’

‘That it is partly inspired, I would fain believe, because as a whole, it evidently transcends the genius of man.’

‘But why not wholly inspired?’

‘Because no book emanating solely from the Fountain of Wisdom would contain contradictions.’

‘Then you imagine that the God of all truth would blend his oracles with the falsehoods of men?’

‘Certainly not; but men may do so.’

‘Can you think that God would r
revelations to be mixed up with t

lations of men, and to be thus palmed upon the world as his divine and exclusive word? Have not some of the greatest and best Christians,—I need only mention Milton, Newton, Boyle, and Locke,—believed the Bible as containing the revelation of His infallible will?—and where they saw no contradictions, it must require some stretch of credulity to believe there are any.’

‘But they were persons of heated tempers, and fervid imaginations.’

‘Nay; except only the first, they were men who aimed at truth through the toilsome and devious path of demonstration, and discarded altogether all resources of the mind, which linger upon the alluring but insecure assumptions of speculation, rather than upon those logical deductions which are based on the mathematics, and therefore cannot lie. What Newton, Boyle, and Locke believed might claim the faith of a sceptic.’

‘But, my dear sir, our belief is not always obedient to our volition. If I wish to believe the Bible to be true, and cannot bring my mind to the conviction that it is so, am I responsible for what happens in spite of my will?’

‘Yes, if you do not seek the means of conviction that are open to you. It ought never to be forgotten, in our search after truth, that we are its recipients, through the favour of Him who is the

fountain of all truth; and if we do not seek for wisdom through him, we are never likely to find it. Believe me, the consciousness of high intellectual powers within ourselves, is the frequent cause of our miscarriage in seeking for the only knowledge which can make us really wise. We lean the whole weight of search upon our frail reason,—a prop that must give way, unless strengthened by divine sustentation. The man who bends his mind with humility to the task of obtaining “that wisdom which is from above,”—beseeching God’s blessing upon his endeavours, is more likely to come at the truth than he who, proud of the vast resources of his own intellect, looks at it like a miser upon his riches, and though he sees the wealth, is blind to the purposes to which it may be applied.’

‘You are right. I have not sought aid where I should have gone for it. I will think of this,—it is a view that did not occur to me. We are, in truth, self-sufficient creatures.’

It was evident to me that I had directed **his** mind upon a new track of inquiry; and I quitted him, glad to perceive that he was not a pertinacious man, and that he did not adopt a fallacy from the mere love of opposition.

tained, he was in his one-and-fortieth year. He was by no means a handsome man, according to the general formula by which beauty is defined, but his countenance was intellectually beautiful. The soul peeped through the skin at every curvature of the countenance, and spoke with voiceless eloquence in a thousand varied articulations, (if I may so call them), of silent but radiant expression. The moment I saw him he excited a deep interest within me, for he was altogether the most singularly interesting man with whom I had ever conversed. He was pale, but not thin, though he had the feeble and relaxed air of an invalid.

In the course of our first conversation, I soon discovered that he was familiarly acquainted with books,—that he had studied deeply, though his mind sought repose rather in the speculative than the true. This opinion was fully confirmed upon my further acquaintance with him. He possessed an inquisitive spirit, but it was never satisfied. It was perpetually in a state of vibration—never at rest. It lacked solidity, but not power; yet, what it had of the latter quality was more the power of impulse than of sober deliberative thinking. He was indued with a quick, rapid, intuitive, but not a grasping intellect. It wanted scope: it displayed immense penetration, yet was without depth. Though it had the clear brilliancy, it had likewise

the thinness of the speculum. He was not a superficial man, so far as knowledge was concerned, for he had studied much, and consequently knew much; but he applied his knowledge superficially. He wanted concentration, and was too much in the habit of diffusing what he knew, so that it spread widely: the further, however, it went, the weaker it became. He was a specious man,—of very brilliant elocution,—and had a truly surprising power of riveting the attention. I never listened to him without delight, and seldom without feeling myself wiser.

In our first interview, little passed worth recording. He told me, that he was in an unhappy state of mind, which rendered him at times so depressed, that he prayed for death as a release from the intense agony of his thoughts.

‘I apprehend,’ said I, ‘that you are labouring under some strange nervous excitement; for, as I entered the room, you were talking to yourself with an earnestness that made me imagine you had a companion.’ He smiled languidly. ‘You have partly guessed my infirmity, of which you may know more when we become better acquainted. I am anxious to avail myself of the conversation of a man with whom I can exchange thoughts to my own profit; and this is not the case in our common

intercourse with men. They only give you copper for your gold,—a very lumbering mintage where the treasure-house is not over spacious.’

‘I feel flattered, sir,’ said I, ‘that you should imagine me capable of making you any better return than copper for your own sterling ore: such as I have, I shall be ready to exchange with you at any time.’

This happened to be a favourable day with the invalid: his spirits were better than usual, though every now and then, his face was suffused with a deep crimson, as some unpremeditated thought appeared to pass over his memory; this was almost instantly succeeded by a paleness so intense, that the lips seemed blackened by contrast with the ashy skin that enclosed them. These changes were but like the light rack of summer suddenly veiling the sun’s orb at noon,—it comes out the brighter from the momentary suffusion. As these transient shadows, or rather spectres of thought passed from his mind, it brightened into beautiful energy, and he spoke with a fervid eloquence that alike surprised and delighted me. I allowed him to give to the conversation that current which seemed best to suit the flow of his own feelings, knowing that I should have other opportunities of sounding him as to the spiritual wisdom with which his rich under-

standing was stored. When I rose to take my leave, he strongly pressed me to repeat my visit on an early day.

The interview with Mr. C——, produced a strong impression upon me. I felt apprehensive that, with such a sagacious and penetrating intellect, I should have insuperable difficulties to encounter in producing right impressions of Religion, provided those he had hitherto entertained were wrong. He was evidently not in the habit of taking any thing for granted, and the love of speculation to which he seemed decidedly prone, led me to suspect that he was more likely to compound a religion for himself in the crucible of his own mind, than receive it already prepared from that well of salvation, the Gospel, promulgated by Divine Wisdom. My suspicions upon this point were strengthened by what his sister had said to me in our interview previously to my visit.

I repeated my call the third day after my first interview, and found him in a state of extreme dejection. He was evidently labouring under a paroxysm of hypochondriasis. Upon asking him how he felt—

‘Hush!’ said he, with a deep contraction of the brow, that almost buried his penetrating eyes beneath the depressed lids,—‘they forbade my telling you; but, sir, ’tis of no use: I must make

you the depository of my secret. I am a miserable tea-pot.'

'A miserable what?' I asked, supposing my ears must have deceived me.

'A miserable tea-pot, sir, which is punished twice a day to gratify the luxuries of this unfeeling family. Shame, shame! Morning and evening is the scalding infusion made within this metallic frame, until the very flies refuse to pitch upon it, lest they should scorch their tiny limbs; and I feel within as hot as a caldron. 'Tis abominable!'

'But, my dear sir,' said I, perceiving now that he was labouring under partial aberration of mind, 'there is nothing metallic in your frame. Believe me, it is all pure flesh and blood.'

'Who ever heard,' he cried, with some vehemence, 'of the spout of a tea-pot being flesh and blood?'—at the same time, extending and curving his right arm, and bending his left over his side, placing the hand upon his hip, so as to represent the spout and handle of the utensil into which he imagined himself metamorphosed. The action was altogether so ludicrous, that I could not forbear a smile.

'I have suffered, sir,' he continued, 'during the period of my metempsychosis, the torments of the doomed. Though I am a tea-pot, could they not hang me up as a kitchen ornament, without sub-

jecting me to the daily purgatory of making my sentient frame a receptacle for that scalding Chinese compound called tea?—which is nothing better than a boiled weed; in short, a hot, exco-riating poison.’

This ebullition soon subsided, and I found him perfectly rational, though now and then he appeared to answer an interrogation as if there were a third speaker present. Having gradually led him to the question, as he had been speaking upon the excellence of certain authors, I asked him if he thought any human work equal, even as a composition, to the Bible.

‘None, certainly.’

‘But what is your opinion of it as a divine oracle?’

‘That it is partly inspired, I would fain believe, because as a whole, it evidently transcends the genius of man.’

‘But why not wholly inspired?’

‘Because no book emanating solely from the Fountain of Wisdom would contain contradictions.’

‘Then you imagine that the God of all truth would blend his oracles with the falsehoods of men?’

‘Certainly not; but men may do so.’

‘Can you think that God would permit his revelations to be mixed up with the rude specu-

lations of men, and to be thus palmed upon the world as his divine and exclusive word? Have not some of the greatest and best Christians,—I need only mention Milton, Newton, Boyle, and Locke,—believed the Bible as containing the revelation of His infallible will?—and where they saw no contradictions, it must require some stretch of credulity to believe there are any.’

‘But they were persons of heated tempers, and fervid imaginations.’

‘Nay; except only the first, they were men who aimed at truth through the toilsome and devious path of demonstration, and discarded altogether all resources of the mind, which linger upon the alluring but insecure assumptions of speculation, rather than upon those logical deductions which are based on the mathematics, and therefore cannot lie. What Newton, Boyle, and Locke believed might claim the faith of a sceptic.’

‘But, my dear sir, our belief is not always obedient to our volition. If I wish to believe the Bible to be true, and cannot bring my mind to the conviction that it is so, am I responsible for what happens in spite of my will?’

‘Yes, if you do not seek the means of conviction that are open to you. It ought never to be forgotten, in our search after truth, that we are its recipients, through the favour of Him who is the

fountain of all truth; and if we do not seek for wisdom through him, we are never likely to find it. Believe me, the consciousness of high intellectual powers within ourselves, is the frequent cause of our miscarriage in seeking for the only knowledge which can make us really wise. We lean the whole weight of search upon our frail reason,—a prop that must give way, unless strengthened by divine sustentation. The man who bends his mind with humility to the task of obtaining “that wisdom which is from above,”—beseeching God’s blessing upon his endeavours, is more likely to come at the truth than he who, proud of the vast resources of his own intellect, looks at it like a miser upon his riches, and though he sees the wealth, is blind to the purposes to which it may be applied.’

‘You are right. I have not sought aid where I should have gone for it. I will think of this,—it is a view that did not occur to me. We are, in truth, self-sufficient creatures.’

It was evident to me that I had directed his mind upon a new track of inquiry; and I quitted him, glad to perceive that he was not a pertinacious man, and that he did not adopt a fallacy from the mere love of opposition.

CHAPTER XX.

CONTINUES TO VISIT MR. C——.—THE CAUSE OF HIS MALADY.—A VISION.—ITS EFFECTS.—HIS EARLY ATTACHMENT.—IDEAS OF LOVE.—ITS CHARACTER.—QUALITIES.—HOW SELDOM FELT IN ITS PURITY.—MR. C——'S COUSIN.—THEIR MUTUAL ATTACHMENT—DISTURBED.—THE LADY'S MIND CHANGES.—MR. C——'S DISTRESS.—HIS CONSEQUENT ILLNESS.

FROM this time I saw Mr. C—— almost every day, for several months; and though he wasted so slowly as to render it scarcely perceptible but after long intervals of time, still it was evident that he was gradually declining. During my numerous visits, I had occasionally heard a repetition of the tea-pot fancy; but the most dominant peculiarity of his distemper was the daily communion which he seemed to hold with some imaginary being; and during these strange conversations, he would become so absorbed as not to notice the entrance of any one into his apartment. He would, moreover, at times, talk with an ardour and eloquence quite amazing. The effect, however, was always singular, as only his part of the dialogue was heard; the replies of his imaginary interlocutor being like the visionary speaker,—a mere waking dream. Still to the invalid it appeared at once a reality and an enjoyment; for nothing could exceed the expression of

fervid joy which his features invariably exhibited during these singular conversations.

While he was in this agreeable delirium, he was never allowed to be disturbed, as it always produced a hypochondriacal paroxysm. When the fit was over he would talk so calmly and rationally, that no one could suspect his mind or heart to be in the slightest degree disturbed.

It was about this time that he one day gave me an insight into his malady, which satisfied me there was no real alienation of mind in his apparent hallucinations. After he had been particularly animated with his shadowy visiter, he said to me one morning,—

‘ My dear sir, you must no doubt think it strange to hear me talk so frequently as you have done, with a being of my own imagination, for it is nothing else; yet, strange as it may appear, to me that being is as real as if she existed in the beauty of her own form and features before me. I know myself to be suffering under one of those delusions arising from nervous sensibility, when objects are brought to the mind’s eye, in so tangible a shape, that we positively seem to feel them, and hear them converse. This, then, is the secret of my distemper. I am daily visited by a being, between whom and me the heavy ocean rolls,—yet I have her oncè, at least, during every day, at my side, in form as palpable as the

living prototype. I am aware of the delusion; I know full well that it is the effect of disease: nevertheless, I cherish the visitation, because it is a balm to my soul. I am sure I should not survive a day if it were not for the stimulus given to my weakened frame, by this literally fantastic, but virtually real intercourse.'

I was a good deal surprised at this communication, and asked him to what he attributed a communion so singularly imaginative, and yet from which he derived so much positive satisfaction.

'That is somewhat a long story,' he replied, 'but you shall hear it; and when you have done so, you will probably be less surprised at the diurnal visitations of my aërial companion.'

'But perhaps you may recall scenes and objects that may shake your feeble nerves, and thus aggravate your malady. Do not run the risk of producing emotion. I can hear your story at some future time, when your improved strength will enable you to tell it with less risk.'

'It will be a delight to me to tell it. I do not find every day a man into whose bosom I can pour, with pure and holy delight, the one deep secret of my soul. I have found such a man in you, and long to make you the depository of a secret, that has never yet found its way beyond the sanctuary of my own bosom.'

There was an animation in his tone, and a fervency of purpose, in the whole expression of his fine features, which convinced me that, to oppose his determination, would only aggravate the excitement into which he was evidently rising. I therefore acquiesced in what he wished, and begged him to proceed.

‘ You will perhaps smile,’ he began, ‘ when I tell you that love is the cause of my malady. This confession, I know, by the worldly philosopher, would be considered at once as the infallible diagnostic of a weak mind; but experience has often told the wisest men, that when the excited feelings of the heart rise up in rebellion against the sage abstractions of the head, they obtain the mastery, and the greatest sage becomes as weak in his resistance as the veriest fool. Nor was Socrates the only philosopher who has turned his love to a beggarly account.

‘ To my love for a woman, who first encouraged that love, and then cast me from her for another, I owe the distemper which is, by degrees, bringing me down to the dark chamber of death. I feel I am not far from that state which puts man and the worm in the same bed together, where the latter has the supremacy; and this I owe to my misplaced affections upon a woman. I am aware there are thousands who would laugh at what they might term my folly; but such have never loved. Love

is not the infirmity, if it be one, of vulgar minds; neither can it be felt by depraved hearts. It is too refined for the one, too spiritualized for the other: it is, therefore, only understood and felt by few. It is as little indigenous in the breast of a Sybarite as in that of a cannibal. The power of the passion is, indeed, known more or less to all, and especially of that master-passion, so often the bane of human happiness, by stagnating the tenderest feelings of the soul, and inundating it with a flood of debasing impulses, which eventually terminate in disgust. But love, pure and undefiled, though "strong as death," is the offspring of sentiment as well as of passion: to the former the latter is subservient. It is the principle which combines all that is great and excellent in the physical, intellectual, and moral constitution of man; and however the mere citizen of the world may affect to despise it, there is not one gleam of human happiness of which it does not constitute the essence. It is the dominant ingredient combining the several elements of good, and it becomes associated, as it were, with this moral combination. In fine, it is the fountain from which every thing is derived, that can be lovely in heaven, or attractive upon earth: for "God is love."

‘Let it not, however, be imagined, that I am here contending for the existence of that mere

abstract principle—that dreaming nonentity which Plato was wont to idealize amid the groves of Academus, and which some senseless visionaries even of our own times,

Who play fantastic tricks before high Heaven,
have affected to worship as a beautiful abstraction. No! the deep feelings of my lacerated spirit remind me but too often that love has a vital existence within me, and is not to be repudiated by a shadow; that it is not merely a spiritual emanation, but the joint production of matter and spirit;—how otherwise could it belong to humanity?

‘However I may be disposed to contend for the purity of that principle which concentrates all the ecstatic, but essential feelings of our nature, into one intense absorbing sentiment, I nevertheless cannot admit of any human love in which the spiritual and physical emotions are not so intimately amalgamated as to operate alike upon our feelings and our thoughts; but I would still contend for that, as the most grateful and abiding affection, which strikes a balance in favour of those sensations that act upon our hearts, rather through the medium of our souls than of our senses. A material being can indeed entertain no definite notion of a feeling purely spiritual. It is the nice adjustment, the harmonious blending of the animal with the spiritual, which constitutes that love so especially

adapted to the human condition. Where it abides warm and true in the human bosom, it is not to be eradicated. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." It is as a new life within us, and expires only with the last spark of existence.

‘ Having now fully expressed my notion of this divine passion, I shall proceed with my history, which is indeed a sad, and to me, a painful one. My mother’s brother dying when I was about twelve years old, left an only child, an infant, of whom my parents took charge, and she was brought up as one of our family. Having known her from a babe, my attachment to this little cousin increased with every year of her growth. As she advanced towards womanhood, she bade fair to be one of nature’s choicest works. In my eyes, at least, she was beautiful. She was as dark as a Spaniard, with eyes of a soft liquid hazel, hair of a deep chestnut, and a countenance altogether radiant with animation. Her extremely dark skin gave an originality to the character of her head and the cast of her features altogether indescribable. I had loved her as an infant; I loved her as a child, and as a woman—nay, I perfectly adored her. In our ages there was just the difference of eleven years. From her very infancy she had appreciated my fondness. As a boy I used to take her upon

my knee, and caress her with earnest endearment. As she advanced towards maturity, she looked upon me with an approving smile, returned my caresses with the unrestrained fervour of artless affection, and appeared happy in my love.

‘ When I first declared to her how completely she was mistress of my heart, a tear stole down her cheek, and she expressed the joy she felt at having secured the affections of a man dearer to her than all upon earth. Our vows of eternal constancy were mutually pledged, and we looked forward to her attaining her twentieth year, for she was then only sixteen, as my parents and her guardians did not think it desirable that she should be married before that age. Nothing could exceed her apparent happiness, and I considered myself in full possession of her love. She appeared to live but in my presence, and apart from her I had no joy.

‘ Thus passed several years of our innocent lives, until she was nineteen, and I thirty. There was not a thought which she did not communicate to me, neither was there a feeling of my heart to which she was a stranger. I loved her with an intensity of which no one can have an idea who has not loved with the like fervour, which I fully imagined to be the case with her. She knew not her own heart. It had not yet been tried, and could not endure the test. It fell at once, as soon

as the touchstone was applied to it. It was an impulsive, but not a faithful heart. When the time arrived which had been fixed for our marriage, she put it off, upon some plausible pretence, which I believed to be valid, and, living in her presence, felt but little disappointment.

About this time an illness, with intervals of remission, of six years' duration, but from which she recovered, prevented our union. After her recovery, she promised finally to be mine. With health, however, came treachery. A youth—a boy, eight years younger than herself,—attracted her notice. He was a shy, timid, silly youth, with light hair, and red cheeks; and to him she resigned her affections. The boy was flattered, and swore a reciprocal attachment. Towards me she soon grew cold. Her coldness felt like an icicle upon my heart. I sought an explanation, when she plainly confessed that I was no longer beloved. This was to me the bitterest agony I had yet endured. I herself loved that girl, but she loved not me. How my soul staggered, when I had made me this discovery! How the words that had been my comfort, now became my torment! How the heart that had been my refuge, now became my prison! How the life that had been my joy, now became my sorrow! How the future that had been my hope, now became my despair! How the light that had been my guide, now became my darkness! How the love that had been my strength, now became my weakness! How the faith that had been my anchor, now became my snare! How the peace that had been my rest, now became my unrest! How the joy that had been my life, now became my death! How the heaven that had been my home, now became my exile! How the glory that had been my crown, now became my shame! How the life that had been my treasure, now became my loss! How the love that had been my all, now became my nothing! How the heart that had been my home, now became my prison! How the life that had been my joy, now became my sorrow! How the future that had been my hope, now became my despair! How the light that had been my guide, now became my darkness! How the love that had been my strength, now became my weakness! How the faith that had been my anchor, now became my snare! How the peace that had been my rest, now became my unrest! How the joy that had been my life, now became my death! How the heaven that had been my home, now became my exile! How the glory that had been my crown, now became my shame! How the life that had been my treasure, now became my loss! How the love that had been my all, now became my nothing!

been of progressive growth : from the infant to the woman, I had loved one who repaid my affection with reciprocal endearments, and finally promised me her hand. My whole being was embued, and I may say nurtured, with the absorbing sympathies which she had kindled within me. Had the passion been one of a few weeks, or even months, I could have relinquished her without a great struggle ; but, when she had grown round my heart, like a creeper round the oak,—to tear from it that which had imparted to it a sort of spiritual vitality, was like tearing open an aneurism, and voiding the fountain of existence. My very life seemed to flow through the rupture. It was to me the blow of death. The issue is not yet consummated, but I feel that I shall die from the shock of that irreparable infliction. And for whom had she cast me off ? For a youth of the most common order of mind ; refined neither in manners, nor in understanding ; in a condition of life too much beneath the level of her own, and with only the countervailing qualities of good-nature and honest principles. Alas ! I was deserted for a rustic boy.

‘ It is nearly a year since the blow was struck which levelled my peace for ever ; but I feel stunned still. The blow has reached my vitals, and not an hour passes that I do not feel the sick-

as the touchstone was applied to it. It was an impulsive, but not a faithful heart. When the time arrived which had been fixed for our marriage, she put it off, upon some plausible pretence, which I believed to be valid, and, living in her presence, felt but little disappointment.

About this time an illness, with intervals of remission, of six years' duration, but from which she recovered, prevented our union. After her recovery, she promised finally to be mine. With health, however, came treachery. A youth—a boy, eight years younger than herself,—attracted her notice. He was a shy, timid, silly youth, with light hair, and red cheeks; and to him she resigned her affections. The boy was flattered, and swore a reciprocal attachment. Towards me she soon grew cold. Her coldness fell like an icicle upon my spirit. I sought an explanation, when she plainly confessed that I was no longer beloved. This was to me the bitterest agony I had yet endured. I literally adored that girl; but she adored not me. How my soul staggered, when I first made the discovery! At this the worldly man may smile; but recollect, sir, that mine had not been the fierce impulsive passion of a few months, produced by the glow of beauty, and kept alive by the excitement of false rapture, in which the mere animal feeling predominates over the spiritual. My affection had

been of progressive growth: from the infant to the woman, I had loved one who repaid my affection with reciprocal endearments, and finally promised me her hand. My whole being was embued, and I may say nurtured, with the absorbing sympathies which she had kindled within me. Had the passion been one of a few weeks, or even months, I could have relinquished her without a great struggle; but, when she had grown round my heart, like a creeper round the oak,—to tear from it that which had imparted to it a sort of spiritual vitality, was like tearing open an aneurism, and voiding the fountain of existence. My very life seemed to flow through the rupture. It was to me the blow of death. The issue is not yet consummated, but I feel that I shall die from the shock of that irreparable infliction. And for whom had she cast me off? For a youth of the most common order of mind; refined neither in manners, nor in understanding; in a condition of life too much beneath the level of her own, and with only the countervailing qualities of good-nature and honest principles. Alas! I was deserted for a rustic boy.

‘It is nearly a year since the blow was struck which levelled my peace for ever; but I feel stunned still. The blow has reached my vitals, and not an hour passes that I do not feel the sick-

me during life. I could have held silent communion with her departed spirit, and have lingered behind with a sweet reliance of hope that I should be eventually united to her in that blessed inheritance of the good, where there is peace which passeth knowledge,—a repose which alone belongs to immortality.

‘After a while, though my sufferings did not subside, I grew reconciled to her desertion of me, so far that my wounded feelings had settled from a state of almost constant effervescence into one of general placidity; but I became occasionally subject to fits of nervous excitement, extremely harassing. My sleep, too, was generally perturbed, and seldom refreshing; and this continual tension of the fine chords of emotion gradually brought me into a state of morbid sensibility, which ended in that peculiar malady the effects of which you have several times witnessed.

‘Daily do I fancy that I am visited by that dear girl, still dear, though she has so sorely wrung my heart; and, though I am fully sensible that it is but the phantom of a nervous conjuration, her form, nevertheless, becomes so distinct, every feature of her bright countenance is so vividly impressed upon my senses, that it has all the truth of palpable life. I seem to hear her voice; we discourse together as we did in the fondest moments of our

love's delirium ; and, strange as it may seem, when the vision is before me, I never think of the loss to which its prototype has subjected me,—but our intercourse appears what it was when I looked forward to a union with her.

‘ It is this singular visitation which keeps me alive ; but the most extraordinary part of the matter is, that though I am conscious of labouring under a delirium, it does not in the slightest degree abate the substantive fruition of which I am perceptible ; while the shadowy resemblance of one I so ardently loved is present with me, I have as positive an enjoyment of her conversation as if she were breathing beside me ; but no sooner does the vision vanish, than a trying reaction generally takes place, bringing on a depression that sometimes produces alienation of mind. You have occasionally witnessed my wanderings during those moments of abstraction. For months this imaginary intercourse has continued, and I am not only sensible that it is a malady, but that it is draining the fountain of life. The dejection which follows these delusions cannot be much longer withstood ; and yet I would not be restored to health for the wealth of worlds, to live and mourn my desolation. I feel my disease to be a boon, and shall die blessing God for his mercy, in having thought me an object fit for his chastening hand.’

He here closed his narrative; and though I saw that he was an intense sufferer, I was glad to perceive a resignation to the Divine will, which I had not anticipated upon my introduction to him. From the first conversation I held with him relative to his religious belief, I expected that he was not likely to be weaned from prejudices, probably long encouraged,—but I was deceived. During our frequent intercourse, I found many of his hasty conclusions give way. He became sensible that he had often judged upon the faith of others, and had not investigated for himself. He sought God's blessing upon his endeavours, and, at length, the blessing of conviction came. It is probable that, had not his mind been disciplined by the visitation which had fallen upon him, he would have made religion a mere speculation, and lived on under the sad delusion—that creeds are made for men, and not men for creeds. But the low state to which his spirit was brought, by the perpetual sappings of his malady, rendered it less repugnant to conviction, and I had the satisfaction, within a few weeks, of perceiving his opinion concerning the Bible completely changed.

When I first saw him, he had never received the Sacrament, and I had no little difficulty in persuading him of the spiritual benefit to be derived from a solemn participation of it. I at length, however, prevailed; and one Sunday morning he

took it, with his aged mother and sister. From that time his faith appeared to be confirmed. He frequently confessed to me the comfort he derived from it, and henceforward received it regularly every month. It had a great effect upon him ; his spirits at times revived for a considerable interval. The fits of hypochondriasis became less frequent and less severe ; though the phantom upon which his heart fed, with craving appetency, still continued to visit him. His friends, nevertheless, persuaded themselves that the periods of those visitations were beginning to diminish.

A few days after he had given me the short narrative of his life, I happened to call during the interval of his delusion ; and as the broken conversation was singular, I made a memorandum of it, as well as my recollection enabled me to do, after I got home. When I entered the room he appeared particularly animated :—

‘ Well, my dearest Jane, as you like : why should I oppose a desire so just ?’

‘ Nay, you do yourself an injustice, believe me : I never gave you credit for qualities which I do not well know you to possess ; and truth is not flattery.’

‘ Well, think so, if you please ; but it will be a difficult matter to make me a convert to your belief.’

‘Aye, I thought so. It struck me there was a mental reservation.’

‘But you know ours is not the affection of a day; it has grown with our growth, and is, therefore, I trust, a portion of our nature. For my part, I feel that I could no more cease to love you, than I could cease to breathe.’

‘There I can’t agree with you: the love of a child may be evanescent, and liable to be diverted; but when the child’s love gradually grows into that of the woman, I should say it is fixed as the everlasting sun in the bright firmament.’

‘Why do you argue thus;—for surely you do not draw your conclusions from your own experience?’

‘Ah, my dear girl, when we reason in matters of the affections, without taking our hearts into previous consultation, depend upon it our reasonings are likely not only to be inconclusive, but altogether false.’

This sort of conversation was carried on for some time; and as the replies to his observations merely passed in his own mind, it was impossible to supply them; but it appeared evident that his thoughts were, at this moment, tending to the change of the lady’s feelings towards him, which had been the sole cause of his malady.’

As he proceeded with the conversation, his emo-

tion became occasionally violent ; and this morning's visit of the vision had been decidedly less gratifying than I had ever before beheld it. At length he said, with a violent effort,—‘ She’s gone !’ and sank back upon his couch in a state of exhaustion. This was succeeded by one of his low moody fits ; but in the course of a couple of hours he rallied, and became tolerably composed.

For several days after this he was better. The visits of his phantom were neither so long nor so exciting as usual, and his family thought that he was improving in health ; but occasionally a violent paroxysm came on, which again overthrew their hopes ; and they were still in a state of equipoise between expectation and apprehension, when a very unlooked-for event occurred, which gave a new colour to his future life, and raised him from a bed of sickness, to a new existence of happiness.

One morning, a lady, who said that she had a particular communication to make to me, was shown into my sitting-room by the servant, and, having politely desired her to be seated, I was rather struck by her appearance, as it brought to my mind a description with which it remarkably corresponded. She was an extremely pretty woman, apparently about thirty, dark as a hazle-nut, with bright expressive eyes, and one of the most animated countenances I had ever seen. In an instant it occurred to me,

that she was the lady by whom my poor friend's mind had been so sadly overthrown. I was right.—She began by telling me, that knowing I was the friend of Mr. C——, and trusting to the sanctity of my professional character, she had called to learn from me if what she had heard were true,—that her cousin was lying in a state of helpless suffering, likely to terminate in death.

‘Madam,’ said I gravely, ‘my friend has for some time been pronounced by his medical man to be dying. The unkindness of one to whom for years he had resigned his heart, will probably prove his doom.’

She burst into tears. ‘I am, indeed, a wretch!’ she cried. ‘I knew not the worth of what I was forsaking. I was unworthy of so much love. Oh, sir! I was unacquainted with my own heart; it had strayed into a wilderness, but has fondly and faithfully returned to its first impressions: yet,’ she continued, sobbing hysterically, ‘he would never endure me now. How could a woman so wrong a man,—such a man, too,—and expect to be forgiven!’

I endeavoured to pacify her, and rejoiced to think that my friend might yet be restored to that society of which he was likely to be so bright an ornament.

When my visiter had recovered her composure,

finding that I was acquainted with her history, she related to me, that when she quitted the family of Mr. C——, she took up her abode with the mother of the youth to whom she had so rashly resigned her affections. Their marriage was delayed for a few months until he should be settled in a partnership in trade which promised to be lucrative. During this interval, the vulgarity of the mother, the homely familiarity of the sisters and other members of the family, the very common sort of people with whom they associated, and above all, the want of refinement in the young man himself, which she had now leisure to discover, satisfied her that the change she was about to make would be a change to unhappiness;—at the same time, recalling the home and the man she had quitted for those by which they were about to be replaced, her false dreams vanished. She made up her mind to relinquish her new admirer, and return to a long-tried and ardent attachment. Acting upon this determination, she declared her intention to the family, who threatened prosecution for breach of contract. This only rendered her the more resolute; and she left them to seek reconciliation with the object of her first affection.

I immediately called, and communicated to Mrs. C—— the unexpected return of her former ward. After the first expressions of surprise, it was

thought prudent that the lady should not be suddenly introduced to her cousin, lest the shock might produce mischief upon his shattered frame. As soon as the usual fit came on, she was brought into the room and seated beside him. He talked as usual,—but she continued silent,—his imagination furnishing the replies. After a while, she gently took his hand; he started,—and the illusion vanished.

‘Heaven!’ he cried, ‘there is something more than a vision here.’ He opened his arms, and the object of his fond heart’s attachment immediately fell upon his bosom. The whole matter was briefly unfolded to him. He had a strong hysterical paroxysm of some duration; and after this had subsided, he was composed.

There was now no rapture in his manner; he seemed no longer to possess that confidence which had been so cruelly disappointed. He talked of the misery he had endured with some bitterness of spirit, and said that the shock of disappointment was bearing him rapidly to the grave. The lady wept bitterly. He was moved,—and it ended in unconditional forgiveness. From this time, the vision ceased to haunt him, as he had the living original before his eyes. The cause of his nervous excitement being removed, he strengthened daily, and within the lapse of a month, was completely

restored to health and peace of mind. He was now once more the happiest of men. His confidence in the affections of his interesting cousin returned, and after the short delay of a few weeks, I united them. Nothing has since occurred to mar their happiness; on the contrary, he has become a delighted father, and his cup of joy is full.

I frequently recall to mind the singular events in this brief episode of a man's life, as evincing one among the infinite variety of modes in which the Divine chastenings are administered. I have witnessed many strange afflictions to which humanity has been subjected by the wise determinations of an Omnipotent will, but never yet saw anything so remarkable as those which were brought before my observation in Mr. C——'s malady. He has had no return of it, but has become a healthy and even a hearty man, with as strong a relish for life as an ardent youth in the very prime of his boyhood.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. AND MRS. T——.—THE PARVENUE.—CONNUBIAL DISCORD.—MRS. T——'S INDISCRETIONS.—AN ADVENTURE.—ITS TERMINATION.—MR. T——'S COMMUNICATION.—AN UNWELCOME VISIT.—MRS. T——'S VIOLENCE.—HER DEFIANCE OF OPINION.—HER ELOPEMENT.—REFLECTIONS.

ABOUT a year after my first settlement in London, I became acquainted with a family named T——. Mr. and Mrs. T—— had been just six years married, and had two children, of the respective ages of two and four years. The husband was the younger son of a baronet, and held an appointment under government, of about six hundred a-year. His wife was quite of plebeian descent; but some of her immediate progenitors had been distinguished as literary persons, and this gave her a sort of *eclat* to which the mere claims of her own mind did not by any means entitle her. She was an exceedingly vain and arrogant woman, assuming all the coarse rudeness of a pampered *parvenue*, and put one very much in mind of a lady's lap-dog, which is allowed to bark and be very disagreeable to all common visitors, but invariably fawns, and seeks the caresses of gentlefolks. Mrs. T—— was, upon the whole, a handsome person; she had a fine Grecian head, save that in the lower features of her face,

especially about the lips, the strong muscular protrusions gave the impression of animal rather than intellectual passion. There was a certain quickness of perception in her large, dark, bright eye; but it conveyed no sentiment of high mental elevation. The most favourable conclusion to which you could come, after a careful scrutiny of her lineaments, was, that Mrs. T—— was a clever woman; and this is just what she proved herself to be, in more ways than one. She always affected a singularity of costume, which she imagined would be followed by women of higher rank; but in this she was mistaken. She had neither sufficient dignity of character nor of taste to originate a fashion; thus, whenever she was to be seen, she looked like an odd thing, that did not belong to the company. It must be confessed, however, that when elaborately dressed in her own peculiar way, she was a striking person. Her tall figure, large frame, and self-concentrated carriage, imparted a certain degree of pantomimic dignity, which rendered her rather an object of attraction; though it was the most amusing thing in the world to hear her rustling her silks, as she glided gallantly through a crowded drawing-room—a sort of alarum to announce that a great lady was approaching. She had (and this many fair ladies do, now-a-days, with greater ease than they can make their petticoats,) written a book

—it may be, two—and for this proved fecundity of intellect, she was patronized as a marvel, by two or three magnates, who puffed her in every society, and finally voted her the pride of their clique.

My acquaintance with Mr. T——, arose from the mere contingent circumstance of his taking a fancy to me. He was one of my congregation, and as such, sought an introduction to me, which led to a sort of friendship, sufficiently cold indeed, on my part, but much more cordial on his; for he entertained such confidence in me, that, whenever he had any family grievance, to me it was immediately communicated. I soon saw that there was not much conjugal harmony in the abode of Mr. and Mrs. T——. The apple of discord was continually rolling between them. I could perceive at a glance that the wife had no regard for her husband; he, on the contrary, entertained towards her a sort of fierce animal affection, made up of sundry passions, and partaking of them all. I have often seen her look upon him with the curl of scorn upon her lip, and a stern reluctance of the eye that has shocked me. From what I have described, it will be readily supposed that the domestic jars between the husband and wife were frequent and boisterous.

The fact really was, that Mr. T—— had sufficient cause for dissatisfaction. Reports began to be circulated, not at all calculated to give him

ease. He was naturally of an impatient and jealous spirit; and his irritable passions were roused by these distracting rumours. The indiscretion of Mrs. T——'s manner was evident to every observer. She received the most marked attentions, in public, from a man of birth and fortune, and in so unequivocal a manner, that it even became the common topic of the town. The quarrels, in consequence, between her and her husband, were kept up with increased acerbity. Their house was almost a nuisance to the neighbourhood, so frequent and so violent were their altercations. The unhappy husband used continually to make me an unwilling listener to his complaints. I knew not how to advise him. It was a delicate matter to counsel in such a case. He had yet nothing but suspicions to ground his accusations upon, yet those suspicions were strong as death, and gave rise to corresponding emotions.

Frequently in my presence vehement disputes took place. Neither the husband nor the wife had the slightest control over their feelings; but, in truth, the fault lay almost entirely with the latter. She was vindictive and scornful. She had married Mr. T—— for a home. Her mother, who was poor, had several daughters, and was, therefore, glad to get an eligible match for one of them. The son of a baronet, with an income, upon

the whole, of about twelve hundred a-year, was not to be passed over. He sought and won the sprightly Miss O——, who was captivated more at the idea of being introduced into fashionable life, and petted as a person of marvellous wit, than with a husband who was a baronet's son.

It is not to be wondered at, that a marriage made under such auspices should turn out unhappy. In the whole course of my experience, I never saw a woman so essentially and absorbingly selfish as Mrs. T——; and, where her own views were thwarted, nothing could exceed the virulence of her malignity: there were no lengths to which she would not go to gratify it. For truth she had no regard, and falsehood therefore became her constant ally, in keeping off the suspicions which were daily hedging her round.

I was one day passing the door of a large house in —— street, when my attention was arrested by a mob which had collected. The cause seemed to them quite a matter of amusement, for I saw no expression of sympathy in a single countenance; but mirth appeared the prevailing feeling among them. I had the curiosity to make my way to the spot, in order to ascertain the cause of so unusual an assemblage, when, to my astonishment, I saw Mrs. T—— on the step of the door, weeping bitterly.

I immediately went up to her, and asked the cause of her apparent agitation of mind, at the same time expressing my surprise at seeing her upon the step of a gentleman's house, in such strange disorder. This produced a violent passion of tears, in the midst of which she began to abuse her husband in such terms of bitter indignation, that several of the crowd raised a loud laugh, which was soon joined in by the whole assembly. I endeavoured to appease the irritated lady, but in vain; and, calling a coach, with some difficulty prevailed upon her to allow me to accompany her home. She was not, however, to be appeased; her violence was utterly uncontrolable: my attempts to pacify her were treated as officious; but I did not, nevertheless, forbear.

I assumed the privilege of my profession, and attempted to reason with her upon the duties she owed to her husband, and to society, not barely as a matter of abstract principle, but as a religious obligation. I appealed to her as a woman, as a Christian, as a being conscious of possessing a soul in a state of probation here, for a condition of eternal happiness hereafter, whether she did not feel the responsibilities under which she lay to God, as well as to man; and besought her to pause in her course of reckless indifference to consequences, lest she should suddenly slip over the brink of the

precipice, towards which she was at that very moment in full career. It was in vain. At the mention of religion, her full sensual lip quivered with passionate scorn; but she was silent.

‘Nay, my dear madam,’ said I, interpreting her meaning, ‘it is a dangerous thing for the less to scorn the greater. What is the gossamer-thread against the fierce blast of the hurricane? What is a worm against the Omnipotent? You enjoy the reputation of having a fine understanding; do not then, I beseech you, raise a question as to the justice of such a reputation, by denying the validity of religion; for nothing can more strongly prove, not only a perverted, but a weak mind.’

‘I care little,’ she said, rudely, ‘for the opinion of a priest. I have my own notions about religion, and don’t want to have them interfered with. If I go to the devil, it will be my own doing; and I don’t see that you are at all likely to put me in the road to Heaven.’

I bowed, and made no further effort to subdue the dogged fierceness of her indignation; but by this time the coach had reached the door of her own house. Having handed her out, I bade her good morning, and retired.

The next time I saw Mr. T——, I was made acquainted with the cause of his wife’s appearance on the step of the large house in —— street. He

communicated to me every particular. It was altogether a strange, and, more especially so far as the lady was concerned, by no means a reputable, tale. It seems that on the morning I had discovered her, surrounded by the mob, she had called at the great house already mentioned, contrary to the express interdiction of her husband. The lady of the mansion received her with much coldness, as her visits had been the cause of domestic dissensions between the Honourable Mr. and Mrs. B——. The wife's jealousy had been excited, and not without reason, by the frequency of Mrs. T——'s visits to her husband, and likewise by the public reports which now daily prevailed of his inconstancy. The haughty reception given to her by Mrs. B——, did not in the least degree tend to induce the unwelcome visiter to depart: on the contrary, with provoking insolence, she seated herself at a table, and taking up a morning paper, began to read it, without speaking a word. The mistress of the mansion immediately rang the bell, and ordered Mrs. T——'s carriage. The lady declined this equivocal civility, simply by telling the servant he might go, as she should not move until she had seen his master. The man retired, and Mrs. B——, at once shocked and overcome by the coarse rudeness of her visiter, quitted the room. In a short time she returned with her husband,

whose countenance was expressive of anything but satisfaction at being thus so rashly exposed in his own house.

‘Madam,’ said he, with a flushed countenance, ‘I really did not expect the honour of this visit; and as your presence is painful to my wife, I am sorry to be under the necessity of telling you that I could wish you in future to be a stranger here.’

‘Ah,’ she replied, sarcastically, ‘you are afraid of your wife’s jealousy; but I am neither to be made your scape-goat, nor her cat’s paw. My visits were once agreeable to you.’

‘Then, madam, if they were so once, they are no longer so. I wish you a good morning.’

‘He was about to quit the room with his wife, who had recovered her composure, and appeared highly gratified at the renunciation of Mrs. T—— by her husband, when Mr. T—— unexpectedly entered, and advancing towards the table where his mortified spouse was seated, said, in a tone of smothered fury, ‘How dared you to enter this house?’

‘Because I chose.’

‘Quit it this moment.’

‘I shall do no such thing.’

‘We shall see.’

He now took her roughly by the arm, raised her from the chair, and was dragging her from the

apartment, but she made such desperate resistance, that he was obliged to obtain the aid of the servants, who, Mrs. B——, having quitted the room, desired would be obedient to the commands of the enraged Mr. T——. His lady was carried from the house by main force, and placed upon a step of the front door, where she lay and screamed with such vehemence that a mob very shortly collected. Meanwhile the mortified husband made his retreat, just before I came up, and took his wife home, as already related.

This affair became for some time the conversation of those circles in which Mr. and Mrs. T—— were wont to visit. Still the latter appeared to care little for the world's opinion. She was exceedingly annoyed at being abandoned by Mr. B——, who, as it afterwards came out, disgusted at her imperiousness, and anxious to conciliate his own wife, had cast off Mrs. T——, greatly to her vexation, indeed, but much to the harmony of his own domestic hearth.

If my poor friend had any hopes of his wife's amendment after this desertion by her quondam admirer, he was soon doomed to undergo a sad disappointment; for she shortly after fixed her attentions upon another favourite, with whom she most unbecomingly trifled whenever they chanced to meet. Her society was at length shunned, save by

men, who sought it, because she generally collected around her men of talents as well as of birth, and were gratified, if not flattered, at being distinguished by the approbation of a handsome woman.

It was evident that this sort of thing could not last. Poor Mr. T—— used to complain to me bitterly of his domestic misery, and had already determined upon seeking a separation from a consort who was such a constant source of vexation to him, when she spared him the trouble and expense, by going off to the Continent with her last favourite.

Since my acquaintance with this family, I had seen the tendency which an absence of religion has to degrade the mind, and brutify the heart. It is clear that where there is no religion there is no moral restraint; for though some persons, who make a mock at creeds, and boast of living without God in the world, may practise an external morality, yet look beyond the surface, and you find that it reaches no deeper. The motive which actuates it, is a mere temporal purpose; for no one, whose principles of conduct are not guided by motives apart from the selfish impulses of personal gratification can appreciate the existence of abstract morality. This is a spiritual principle, which cannot exist but in connexion with religion, because religion is the fountain from which all spirituality is derived to man. The mere outward seeming, and the inherent pos-

session, are by no means one and the same thing; nor do I think there is such a living object to be found as an irreligious man, being likewise a moral man. I have never made such a discovery in my experience; and of this I am sure, that had Mrs. T——'s mind been imbued with the principles of religion, she never would have quitted her home with the blight of infamy upon her name.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE UNEXPECTED MEETING.—REVERSE OF CONDITION.—
THE PENALTY OF VICE.—MRS. T——'S DEGRADATION.—
REFLECTIONS.—THE VISIT.—ITS RESULT.—TERMINATION
OF A DISAGREEABLE INTERVIEW.—AN UNEXPECTED
SUMMONS.—AN AWFUL SCENE.—MRS. T——'S SUFFER-
INGS AND DEATH.

Two years after the event recorded at the close of the last chapter, as I was passing through Bond-street, in the month of November, I was accosted by a woman, in a way so offensive, that I was about to call a watchman, when to my astonishment and distress, I discovered it to be Mrs. T——. She was intoxicated; and as she staggered towards me, the broad glare of the lamp over a chemist's shop fell upon her disfigured countenance, and showed the fearful devastations of two short years. It was now sallow and bloated. Her once bright eyes had become dull and glaring,—her figure gross and unwieldy. She was dressed in a tawdry cotton gown, and was filthy to the most disgusting degree. Reeling under the effects of ardent spirits, she recognized me; and, to my infinite mortification, hailed me loudly by name. Her mode of life could not be misunderstood; and I was perplexed what course to pursue.

It happened that I knew the parties who kept a shop close by. I went and asked if they would allow me to speak to the woman at the door,—for thither she had followed me,—telling them that I had known her in better days, as the wife of a man of family. The sanctity of my profession precluded the probability of there being any impropriety in granting my request, which was immediately acceded to. When the unhappy woman stood before me, in the small parlour behind the shop, I was shocked at the squalid misery of her appearance. She had lost several teeth, and one of her eyes was swollen and blackened to a frightful degree. Her whole gait was so coarse and common, that it was difficult to recognize the once gaily, but singularly dressed, Mrs. T——, whose ambition was to be a sort of female Brummel.

After she had been seated a short time, the fumes of the spirits seemed to disperse, and leave her intellects comparatively clear. I learned from her that, a little more than a year after her elopement she quitted the partner of her infamy, and since that period had been living a most profligate life, associating with the vilest of her sex, and often reduced to a state of pitiable destitution. Her only comfort, she assured me, was during intoxication when she forgot her miseries, and had neither memory of the past, nor care for the future. In proportion as

her intellects recovered from the effects of her late excess, she became affected. She wept frequently. She admitted that her life had been to the last degree depraved,—that she had wronged her husband in a way never to be forgiven.

‘I have nothing to hope for from God or man,’ she said, with a wild vehemence of tone, ‘but much, perchance, to fear.’

‘Then why continue in a career of guilt, which leads to nothing but remorse in this world, and to worse in another? It is not too late, surely, to break off your evil habits, which are fraught with so much mischief. Is it not worth while to try the experiment of a change, when your present condition is one, not only of awful bereavement, but of severe suffering?’

‘This is a mighty easy thing in theory,’ she said, with coarse, bitter levity, ‘but not quite so easy in practice. My habits are formed. To relinquish them would be like relinquishing my heart’s blood. It is essential to my very existence that I should yield to them; for they are now, not mere accessories of my wayward passions, but a positive and identical part of my physical nature.’

I found her the same untractable being which she had ever been. Her spirit was rather exasperated than bowed by the melancholy change that had come over her. There was no real contrition,

no desire after moral elevation ; all within was still gross, animal, and selfish. She occasionally wept, but hers were the scalding tears of angry disappointment, not of remorse. She thought herself the most ill-used creature alive ; and, in the course of an hour's conversation, I could not draw from her one sentiment which ought to be indigenious in a woman's bosom.

I asked her, at length, if she would wish me to apprise her husband of the deplorable condition to which she was reduced, expressing my conviction that he would, at least, do something to mitigate her distress. She laughed savagely, and, with an oath that made me shudder, swore she would rather die than receive a benefaction from him, at the same time loading him with such abuse, that I was obliged to cut short the interview, by rising to take my departure, desiring her to call at my house on the following morning, when I would see what could be done to lift her from the fearful state of degradation into which she had plunged herself. I saw her into the street, put what little money my purse contained into her hand, and made the best of my way home, under a state of mind exceedingly painful and embarrassing.

I was perplexed beyond measure. It was clear that the fiery and indomitable temper of the

wretched woman whom I had just quitted, would never be quelled. All arguments were lost upon her;—she was insensible to persuasion. I knew not what was to be done; still it was necessary that every possible method should be tried to reclaim her.

When I reached my home, I threw myself upon a couch, exceedingly distressed at the occurrence of the evening. It was clear that I had altogether a new and painful duty before me. Under any circumstances, the sight of a perfect reverse of condition for the worse is a melancholy thing; but to see a woman, once accounted beautiful, who took her station amid the higher ranks of the community, with a reputation for talent above the common scope of female minds,—to see, unmoved, such a woman reduced to a state of absolute bereavement,—changed from all that I have described, to a low, unsightly, depraved object, her person offensive to the sight, and her words to the ear, was beyond the control of the most stoical philosophy.

The next morning brought Mrs. T—— to my house, decently attired. Our conversation was a long one, but, as I had anticipated, profitless. Her imperious temper continually broke out into paroxysms, which I had no little difficulty in assuaging. I urged upon her whatever I could conceive

likely to subdue her overbearing spirit, and bring her to a sense of her duties as a woman and a Christian. She all but laughed me to scorn.

‘No!’ she cried, ‘I have been an ill-used person.’

‘By whom?’

‘By my husband,—by the wretch for whose sake I quitted that husband’s roof,—by the whole world; and the cries of an injured woman shall be long and loud.’

I could not bring her to admit that she had acted wrong, though, when she was puzzled to vindicate her conduct, tears came to her relief; in fact, she wept and raved by turns. It was evident to me that she laboured, so to speak, under a chronic excitement of mind, aggravated by her daily habits of intemperance. That she was wretched, the morbid irritability of her temper sufficiently indicated. She did not hesitate to confess, that nothing composed her but deep potations of ardent spirits, an indulgence which she candidly admitted she was not disposed to relinquish. I besought her to reflect on the sad harvest of misery she was preparing for herself to reap.

‘Your course of life,’ said I, ‘is hurrying you rapidly to the grave;—but are you prepared to die?’

Her large eye dilated, her lip vibrated with the

rapid oscillation of a struck harp-string, and she buried her forehead in her hand. She was staggered at a thought so suddenly forced into her mind. I had never before seen her so much moved.

‘Death,’ said I, ‘is a serious reflection to the best among us;—what, then, must it be to the worst?’

She remained silent. Whatever we may try to persuade ourselves, truth is immutable, and will not change, only because it may not happen to please us to believe it. Our disbelief will not convert wrong into right.

‘But,’ said she, suddenly raising her head, ‘if I don’t believe;—what then?—is there not an end of the matter? I cannot make that appear white which my senses represent to be black.’

‘You labour under the delusion of all unbelievers. Yours is a common, and therefore a weak, fallacy. You are incredulous, because you have never sought to believe with quiet devotion of heart and earnestness of purpose. May I ask, have you ever sought conviction from God?’

‘Never! Has he not planted the faculty within me of judging betwixt right and wrong,—between truth and falsehood? Why, then, should I seek from him a discrimination which he has implanted in my nature, and furnished surely for no other purpose than that it should be employed?’

‘He has indeed imparted the faculty, but only as a means to an end. Employed as He directs, the issue will be good; but employed as he forbids, the issue must be evil.’

Although I could not induce her to admit much, or to show any decided symptoms of contrition for past delinquency, yet was it clear to me that I had produced some impression. She was greatly disturbed. She wept several times with deep emotion, though the moment the exacerbation subsided, the outbreak of her passion was dreadful. She quitted me with a flushed cheek and a dry burning hand. She was to call the next day, in the hope of meeting her mother, whom I had promised to apprise of her being in London.

There was something so wild in the broad flash of her eye, as she quitted the room, that it convinced me there had been a fiercer struggle within than her pride would permit her to express. As she left the house, an unaccountable presentiment, which I could not control, took possession of my mind. For some time after this painful interview, I could not banish her image from my thoughts: it was associated with ideas of disaster and of death.

That very day I called upon her husband and her mother. I related to them my two melancholy interviews with the wife of the one, and the daughter of the other. Both were much affected.

Mr. T——^A liberally declared his willingness immediately to make a suitable provision for her, and the mother readily embraced the proposal of meeting her unhappy child at my house, on the following day.

Mine was, in truth, a melancholy communication. After a consultation, we agreed that it would be best to place her as a boarder in some respectable family, where she might occasionally see those few, among her relatives, who, it was hoped, would be still disposed not utterly to cast her off. While I was engaged in conversation with the mother, upon this melancholy topic, I received a summons from Mrs. T——, to beg that I would instantly visit her, as she was dying. I was stunned at the communication. All I could learn from the messenger, was, that the unhappy woman was very ill,—that a medical man had been sent for, who pronounced all chance of recovery hopeless. Her mother consented to accompany me. I immediately sent to Mr. T——, but he declined joining us.

We were driven into a narrow street, in the neighbourhood of Soho-square, and the coach stopped before a dark, dirty house, the door of which was crowded by a number of squalid children. Upon asking the landlady for Mrs. T——'s room, she said, with a sort of stony sorrow, 'Aye, poor thing, you're just come in time to see her die.'

She has had a hard bout on't. Here, Annie, show this here good lady and gentleman to the back kitchen, where Mrs. T—— lodges. Take care, ma'am, of the stairs,—they're a leetle crazy.'

We passed down into the dark abyss, and were soon at the door of the back kitchen. Upon entering, the scene was one never to be forgotten. Mrs. T—— in convulsions, was stretched upon a mattress on the floor. There was nothing in the room but a small deal table, a broken chair, the bed on which the wretched woman lay, a few fractured cups and saucers, and a pewter pot. The mattress, ragged and filthy, was placed in a corner of the gloomy unwholesome apartment, and upon this the dying sinner was stretched, evidently in the agonies of death. Her eyes rolled wildly, but the expression was inward. It seemed as if she would have looked into her own soul. There appeared no consciousness of external objects. The scrutiny was within; and this was sufficiently appalling. Her mother, who had accompanied me, was so overcome, that I was obliged to lead her from the chamber. Happily, her daughter, on seeing her, expressed no sense of recognition.

Upon returning to the room, the cause of the scene I had been here called upon to witness was sufficiently apparent. Several women had crowded round the bed, and among them was the apothecary,

who held a bottle in his hand, which he declared to have contained arsenic. The contents had been swallowed by Mrs. T——.

After a short interval, there was a slight abatement of her paroxysms, and I took her hand. Every finger was convulsed, and, bathed in a cold, thick unctuous exudation, which made my blood creep up to my heart, where, for a moment, it seemed to stagnate. I spoke to her. My voice appeared to recall her consciousness, and she fixed upon me the full broad glance of her dilated eye; the expression gradually rising in intensity, until it became so concentrated, that I thought it would have reached my inmost soul. At length she stammered, 'I am dy—y—ing; pray fo—r me.'

I immediately prayed aloud, but this only aggravated her sufferings: her convulsions became stronger and more exhausting. Her face was purple. The death struggle was so fierce that her very nails became discoloured, and her feet and hands livid. She bit her tongue and lips, from which the blood lazily trickled, as if there was not enough of life left to impel the purple tide from its ruptured channels. The few broken sentences she uttered, betrayed the dreadful apprehensions under which she was labouring. I proposed to give her the Sacrament; but she pushed me from her with such an effort of expiring energy, that I staggered backward, and,

but for the wall, should have fallen. I saw that, to this dying sinner, religion could afford no hope. She was struggling in the meshes of despair, from which no human arm could extricate her. I here saw an evidence, and I have witnessed many, that the death-bed of infidelity is not only one of awful distrust, but of horror. Death was now about to strike. The desperate gasp, the utter prostration, proclaimed his conquest. I put my mouth to the ear of the unhappy woman, and said, ‘Rest your soul upon God’s mercy. Have you any hope? if you have, raise your hand.’ There was a groan and a spasm,—the foam oozed from her lips,—the corners of her mouth contracted, and all was still! “She died, and made no sign.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

A JUVENILE PARTY.—THE FORTUNE-TELLER.—JULIA ——. —THE PROPHECY—ITS EFFECTS.—MY VISIT TO JULIA. —HER CREDULITY—NOT TO BE SHAKEN.—THE YOUNG LOVER.—A SAD CHANGE.

As from the acorn rises the lofty and majestic oak, which furnishes nations their navies, and covers the broad sea with fabrics that live amid its waters and deride their mighty turmoil, when the tempest has lashed them into fury, and they seem to rise from their slumbers as stern arbitrators between life and death, —so, from the most insignificant events are results frequently produced, which furnish matter for the chronicler, spread the blight of desolation upon the domestic hearth, scatter far and wide the seeds of misery, infuse the leaven of destruction into the prosperity of nations, and dash from their brows the crowns of kings.

I was one evening at a friend's house, where a juvenile party had congregated; and while they were actively engaged in the merriment of blind-man's-buff, an old woman was said to be at the door who would tell the ladies' fortunes for a trifle. The game was instantly stopped, and the young people begged that the prophetess might be

admitted. Among the merry group here assembled, was a fine, handsome girl, in her nineteenth year, niece of the gentleman in whose house the juvenile party were assembled. She was the eldest of the company,—for I was a mere casual visiter,—which consisted exclusively of young persons, forming a little knot of eight school-fellows.

After some demur on the part of my friend, and rather warmer expostulations on mine, which were finally overruled, the pythoiness was admitted. She was a very dirty old woman, and seemed to have derived whatever inspiration she might possess, from the spirit of the public-houses, for the aroma of gin,—that bane of vulgar life,—exhaled from her throat, bronzed and scraggy without, with so strong a perfume, as at once to settle the question of her spirituous predilections. Her modes of divination were various: chiromancy, geomancy, and cards, were severally employed to work out the prophecies of this bibacious sybil. Having received sixpence from each girl, she began to give them some account of their future lives, to which they each listened as to the voice of an oracle. Upon my ridiculing the affected prescience of the stranger, Julia ——, the young lady to whom I have already alluded, as if ashamed of being thought so credulous as her companions, expressed her unqualified disbelief in all such predictions. As she

spoke, the beldam eyed her with a lurid scowl, that caused the blood instantly to recede from the girl's cheek, but ashamed at having exhibited any symptom of alarm, she quickly rallied, and affected to receive the vaticinations of the prophetess with perfect incredulity.

The old woman told, in succession, the fortunes of the younger friends to whom she promised wealth, an auspicious union, and perfect happiness, until she came to Julia ———, who looked at her evidently with a forced smile, as the hag advanced to pronounce the secrets of the future. The pythoness bent her dim eyes upon the fair girl with a solemn stare, pursing her withered brows into innumerable wrinkles, and drawing down the corners of her mouth with a lugubrious expression of prophetic wisdom.

‘Let me look at your left hand.’ The girl raised it—her fingers trembled, and the impostor saw at once that she was not only believed but feared.

‘There are dark shadows crossing these lines. They are traversed too—there is much disappointment for thee, lady. The characters of joy now fade before my sight; the black writing of woe comes over them, and blots them out.’

Poor Julia grew deadly pale; her breath became thick and short; yet, by a resolute effort, she cast off her terror, gave a feeble, but forced smile, and bade her tormentor proceed.

Perceiving the effect which the revelations of her pretended inspiration produced, she said, stooping her head over the girl's hand, and assuming a still more ominous expression,—‘Lady, you are engaged to be married, but the spectres of disappointment surround the bridal bed: you will never be led to the altar by the hand of a lover;—you will pine in secret, but never wed. Listen! You are fond of the brute tribe;—you will never caress another of the dumb creation—never—it is the voice of destiny. There is more misery still. You have derided the prophetess, but you will believe what she has said to your bane;—you will fear her henceforth, and expiate your disbelief with scalding tears. You will shun your companions;—you will reject the food that nourishes you;—pining will wear you to a shadow;—your home will be a dungeon without its darkness, but with all its horror; and you will lose your wits, lady—’

Seeing that the distressed girl was now becoming painfully agitated, I desired the crone to desist; but she had worked her victim to that pitch of mental excitement that defies resistance. The struggle had been maintained with determined energy: the spirit, however, became at last overmastered, and Julia ——— sank, senseless, upon the floor.

By this time the fortune-teller had quitted

the room, grinning scornfully, at the effect produced by her pretended predictions. It was a long time before we could succeed in restoring the affrighted girl to her senses; and when she did revive, she had several hysterical paroxysms, that exceedingly alarmed us all. A medical man was sent for, who was obliged to administer an opiate before he could compose her. After taking this, she fell into a placid sleep.

I felt greatly grieved at the unhappy issue of the evening's frolic. I had always entertained an invincible antipathy to fortune-telling, because it is often mischievous, and even where no evil follows, it is never attended with good. The mere chance of its doing mischief is a sufficient reason why it never should be allowed. The effect which it had produced on Julia, was not likely to be soon shaken off, for she was clearly a person of an excitable temperament, and had evidently a strong superstitious belief in the prophetic endowments of fortune-tellers, notwithstanding she had affected to deride them.

The unexpected issue of the old woman's prophecy had entirely interrupted the harmony of the evening. All the young people looked sad: their sports were constrained; blind-man's buff was no longer pursued, and even the happy predictions of the prophetess in their favour ceased to impart pleasure.

Next morning I called to inquire after Julia —. She was in the room when I entered; her hand trembled as I took it; her countenance was flushed, and her lip had assumed the delicate curve of despondency, peculiar to this expressive feature. She assured me she was quite well; but there was a gentle trembling in her articulation, that satisfied me she did not feel at ease. She spoke little, and when I alluded to the events of the preceding evening, the blood quitted her cheeks in a moment, and she sat before me pale and motionless as marble.

I was pained to see that a fearful impression had been made upon this innocent girl, and endeavoured to counteract it by pointing out the absurdity of an old woman of the lowest habits, and, more than probably, of the worst propensities, being endowed with the gift of prophecy.

‘Ah, sir,’ said she quickly, ‘but the witch of Endor, was she not a wicked old woman?’

‘Not, my child, that I am aware of? She is not said to have been old; neither is it directly stated that she was wicked, though we are led to infer this from her employment. That she was a person of some consequence may be justly assumed from the circumstance of her having “a fat calf in her house,” and making good cheer to receive her guest. Besides here was one of those very extra-

ordinary occasions where the Almighty acts by extraordinary means. Many eminent commentators, moreover, consider that Saul, who was a melancholy and superstitious man, was allowed by God to be the dupe of an artful juggler,—and persons of distinction, in those times, engaged in the practices of what have been called, magical arts, though no such arts really exist,—who practised her delusions with the same surprising success, which, even to this day, attend the tricks of jugglers in all parts of the world, especially in the East; their performances, nevertheless, are known to be **nothing** more than skilful appliances of art.’

‘ But have you not known the predictions of fortune-tellers in modern times come to pass ?’

‘ Never.’

‘ I have. A gipsy prophesied that one of my sisters, then quite an infant, would die within the year, and it died three weeks after, of scarlet-fever.’

‘ True. But was not the scarlet-fever, at that time, prevalent in the neighbourhood—**nay**, was it not in the next house? Surely, then, a very bungling calculator of chances might have predicted your little sister’s death, and much **nearer** the period, too, without having the **gift** of divination.’

‘ Then how is it that so many persons believe in fortune-tellers?’

‘Only because they are weak, silly people. Surely, because weak people believe a thing, this is no proof that it is true.’

‘Well, I dare say I am silly, but I cannot help feeling very unhappy.’

I found that my arguments produced no favourable effect. She became occasionally overcome by excess of agitation, and wept bitterly. I endeavoured to make her sensible of the criminality of giving way to such weak apprehensions; and, although she acquiesced in my representations, I could, nevertheless, perceive that she was not convinced. Her uncle was much distressed at the unhappy issue of an indulgence which he had consented to, under the idea of making his niece and her young friends merry, and upbraided himself with having so easily yielded to those solicitations, which, now he discovered the mischief likely to accrue, he felt he ought to have resisted.

I quitted the house with a painful presentiment: I could not shake it off. The mind of that unhappy girl had evidently received a powerful shock, and, with her extreme sensibility of temperament, it was impossible to say what might ensue.

For several weeks after this time I used to see her every two or three days, being upon terms of great intimacy with her uncle, in whose house she lived, and feeling a lively interest in the niece, who,

though a weak, was an extremely amiable girl. At first I did not perceive any great change. She continued melancholy, timid, and, at times, laboured under such severe depression of spirits, that it was impossible to rouse her. The young man to whom she was engaged to be married was greatly concerned at the evidently morbid state of her mind. He was about to enter the church, and was to be ordained upon a living worth six hundred a year, in the gift of his father. It had been settled that he should marry Julia so soon as he should be in orders.

Since the night of her encountering the fortune-teller, whenever the young man to whom she was engaged had called, she met him with a degree of embarrassment which gave him great uneasiness. There was no longer that frankness in her manner which she had ever before exhibited; her conversation was constrained. She appeared reserved and even shy, as if a change had come over her heart; yet she assured him that her sentiments were unaltered. He attributed this to the impression made upon her by the fortune-teller's prophecy, and reconciled himself to her altered manner towards him, under the persuasion that time would subdue her melancholy, and restore her spirits to their wonted buoyancy.

Week after week, however, passed on, and there

was no change. She gradually became less and less gratified at his visits, and, at length, never met him without betraying agitation. His endearments were of no avail: she shrank from them as if there were something blighting in his aspect. This he was in the habit of communicating to me, when I saw him after his visits, which I frequently did, as we had been intimate since his engagement to Julia ———.

CHAPTER XXV.

A VISITER—HIS DISTRESS.—THE REJECTION.—CALL AT MR. ——'S.—JULIA'S RECEPTION.—HER IMPRESSIONS INDELIBLE.—HER FINAL RESOLUTION.—THE PHYSICIAN'S ADVICE—UNSUCCESSFUL.—HER DEATH.

ONE morning, the young man engaged to marry Julia ——, called upon me. I perceived that he was greatly agitated. His eyes glistened with the tears that started into them the moment I spoke to him. When he was seated, I asked him the cause of his apparent uneasiness. 'My dear sir,' said he, 'I am just come from Mr. ——'s house, where I have received Julia's refusal to fulfil her pledge. Of late, as you know, the mental depression to which she has now so long been a victim, has considerably increased. This morning, I called, and found her unusually excited. My presence caused a paroxysm, which subsided after some time, and she appeared tolerably composed. I took her hand,—it was cold and moist, as if covered with the dews of death. She trembled,—turned from me, and burst into a passion of tears. I tried to console her,—but in vain. She shook her head as I spoke, and her eye glared wildly, as if some horrible phantom had crossed her brain. 'Julia,'

said I, 'at length, you are weakly giving way to the melancholy which is daily overcoming you: believe me, a little exertion of energy would release you from this trouble. The time for our union is now approaching: let this be your abiding reflection, and the enemy to your peace, which is but a mental delusion, will give way.'

'No, no,' she replied, starting from her seat, and striking her temples with her clenched hands, 'I am doomed. Charles, we can never be united. The fiat has gone forth. You must seek another.'

I endeavoured to expostulate, but this only increased her exacerbation.

'Listen,' she said, hurriedly; 'I am placed within the circle of a malignant destiny. I cannot overstep the boundary. My fate has been foretold with unerring precision. We can never be united!'

'Can it be possible,' I asked, 'that you really believe that impostor's half-drunken sallies to have been veritable inspirations?'

'Yes!' she replied with vehemence. 'They are seared upon my soul in characters of living flame. I read my destiny there as clearly as if it were written with the point of a diamond upon the crystal rock. Did she not say that I should loathe my food? and to me it is becoming daily an object of disgust. I eat, that I may not starve,—for I would not die; but the food which I feel obliged to swallow is odious to my sight.'

‘It is painful to relate to you all that passed; her excitement rose in proportion as I tried to soothe her; and she ended by rejecting me, with a solemn appeal to Heaven.’

The poor young man concluded his recital with a heavy sigh. I could perceive that he was deeply affected, and I promised to call with him the following day. Matters appeared now to be coming to a crisis. It was a grievous thing to see the happiness of two amiable young people contravened by the counterfeit divinations of a criminal pretender. I had always considered the encouragement given to fortune-telling to be deplored, since it has been frequently the cause of mischief, as was too lamentably proved in the present instance. The very desire to look into futurity, when the Almighty has evidently withdrawn it from our scrutiny, is sinful; and when we seek to gratify a sinful wish, evil may be expected to ensue. If it had been the will of God that we should, under any circumstances, be made acquainted with future events, it is scarcely to be credited that he would endue with the power of making such communications, a class of besotted old women; for such are invariably resorted to when the secrets of the future are expected to be unfolded. Neither pious men nor pious women are ever consulted upon these matters, because they are

not so profane as to assume that they hold prophetic gifts; it is, therefore, one of the strongest anomalies in the moral constitution of a large number of persons, and those too frequently possessing deep religious feeling, that they should seek information upon matters hidden in the unexplored depths of futurity, from the most profane objects, and believe that these are especially gifted with a power which can proceed from God alone; for evil spirits, by which some of the credulous suppose that fortune-tellers are governed, possessing not the attribute of Omniscience, cannot impart what is perceptible only to the Divine mind.

On the following morning, I accompanied my young friend to the house of Mr. ———, where we were immediately introduced to the unhappy girl who had so solemnly rejected him the preceding day. She was reclining on a sofa, earnestly gazing upon a linnet which was singing in a cage near the opposite window. At our entrance, she turned her eyes languidly, and extended her hand towards me, without rising, accompanying it with an expression of appeal, that she might be spared the regular forms of courtesy, from her state of health. She was as pale as a corpse. That fine glow of animated health which used to mantle in her cheek,—a legible record of happy thoughts, and of exemption from care, had been succeeded by that

sallowness of skin and relaxation of feature, which told a sad tale of harrowing reflections and grievous heart-burnings. My bosom throbbed with painful solicitude, as I gazed upon a young creature thus smitten, in the bloom of youth and of health, with a blight that seemed to have reached the very fountain of existence, and was hurrying her rapidly to that land of darkness which we must all pass through, ere we reach the regions of everlasting life.

I seated myself by the sufferer, and retained her hand, which she had extended to me on my entrance. She did not attempt to withdraw it, but every fibre was so relaxed, that it appeared as if she were unconscious of the pressure of mine. A deep sigh was heaved from her bosom, and a tear suffused the half-closed eye. She did not speak. After a short interval, I broke the silence, which was becoming painful to all parties, by asking her how she felt. The question evidently affected her, for she instantly closed her eyelids, and a tear, gradually forcing its way from within the crystal cell which they had enshrined, rolled over her pallid cheeks.

‘Come,’ said I, ‘my dear girl; this weakness is criminal. You are wanting in your duty both to God and to yourself, in thus giving way to idle fantasies. You are, besides, doing an injury to those who love you affectionately. Resort, for

support, to Him who never refuses to sustain such as diligently seek him.'

She opened her eyes to their utmost extension, and, fixing them upon me with an expression of intense anguish, said,—'I am forsaken of God.'

'My child!' I replied solemnly, 'this is blasphemy: do not give way to such unholy fancies. God never deserts those who appeal to him earnestly in their hour of visitation.'

'Nay,' she exclaimed, interrupting me with energy, 'I am past consolation now. My doom is sealed. The predictions of that awful night must be accomplished: most of them have already come to pass. I have not caressed a dumb creature since the prophecy. Yonder linnet, which used to take its groundsel daily from my hand, has never since heard from my lips the voice of cheering, or taken from my fingers its morning nourishment. I have shunned my companions, have loathed my food, and my tongue has pronounced a vow of separation from him who had won my heart.'

'But you are fulfilling the predictions by your own fatuity. Because you have heard them pronounced, you seem determined that they should be accomplished, as if you wished to establish the credit for divination of a wicked woman, who can see no further into futurity than a worm into the rock over which it crawls. If you had never heard

these follies, you would have neither neglected your bird, shunned your companions, loathed your food, nor rejected your lover. You are yourself bringing to pass all those particulars, the fulfilment of which you so much dread.'

'Nay, sir; you may try to blind me to my fate; but I see it as clearly as I do the beams of yonder sun, which, at the moment, pass with a blast of mockery over my spirit. They cannot dissipate its darkness. Charles,' said she, after a pause, extending her fair hand towards him, 'forgive me, that I cannot marry you. We are not the workers of our own destinies. The web of fate is woven by mightier hands than ours; and we must abide the consummation. Do not imagine that my love has subsided; it will accompany me to the grave, and there dwell in my heart, like an essence, amid the silence of that dreary dwelling, until freed from its prison, in the kingdom of glory, where it may be expressed and reciprocated, and where it will exist for ever.'

My young friend took her hand and bathed it with his tears; but no impression was to be made upon the diseased mind of this unhappy girl. There were occasional incoherencies in her speech, which made me greatly fear that her intellects were giving way. Perceiving, at length, that our presence became painful to her, we withdrew. Poor

Charles was sadly distressed at the issue of our visit, for he loved this fair, stricken creature with an attachment so ardent, that I believe he would have willingly sacrificed his life to restore her lost peace of mind. What was to be done I could not imagine. Several physicians were consulted, who treated her disease, for such it evidently was, as a mere temporary delusion, which would eventually give way; but to me this appeared by no means certain. The uncle, who loved his niece with the affection of a parent, took her to a watering-place, hoping that change of scene would produce a favourable effect upon her alienated mind. She returned without any abatement of her mental malady. Nothing could wean her from the sadness to which she clung, as if it were the vital principle that sustained her.

We began to abandon all hopes of ever beholding a change, when the physician who attended her, suggested that the person whose predictions had produced those morbid impressions, should be sought after, and prevailed upon to utter a counter prophecy. The woman was easily found, as her place of abode happened to be known to one of the servants. She answered the summons. I was present when she came. On being told the effect of her pretended inspirations, a sardonic smile passed over her homely, withered features. She expressed no regret; but, upon Julia's uncle putting

a sovereign into her dark, horny palm, she clenched it with the eagerness of a kite clutching the foul carrion upon which it feeds, and said, with that husky voice, half-whisper and half-screech, peculiar to throats which have long had their natural secretions dried up by the parching influence of ardent spirits, 'I'll soon manage the young gentlewoman; leave her to me: she won't die this bout. We old women, you see, know a thing or two. When doctors halt, we wise ones are called in to set 'em right.'

When she entered the room, Julia shrieked, the moment she beheld her, and fell senseless upon the sofa. The hag, nothing moved at witnessing the ruin she had wrought upon that once sprightly girl, stood over her with the malignant scowl of a demon, as if she gloried in the sad effects of her fictitious prophecies.

'She'll soon come to, and then 'twill be quick work. She pretended to scout me; but look here, and see the consequences of scouting a fortune-teller. She might have had better luck, if she had practised better manners.'

After a considerable interval, the wretched girl revived; but so soon as her eyes fell upon the object who had been the cause of her misery, delirium instantly followed. The physician was present. He ordered the woman to be removed.

She quitted the apartment, muttering. It was several hours before Julia was restored to perfect consciousness, and then it became evident that she was past hope. It was a melancholy sight to see one, in the lovely morning of her youth, thus prostrated. Alas! I can never forget this sad hour. The young man to whom she had been betrothed, quitted the house with the determination of going abroad, and giving up the church. I saw poor Julia but once after this time, and then it was to behold her attenuated corpse upon the narrow bed of a madhouse!

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. AND MRS. L——.—THEIR DAUGHTERS.—PARENTAL PREFERENCE.—THE FAVOURITE.—REASONS FOR MATERNAL PARTIALITY—COMBATTED.—THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER IN DISGRACE.—HER DEFENCE.—THE SPOILED CHILD. RELEASE FROM PARENTAL TYRANNY.

AMONG the acquaintances which I formed after my finally settling in London, was a family who lived at Pimlico. Mr. L—— held a situation in one of the public offices, at a salary of four hundred a-year, which constituted his entire income. He was a well-meaning, but a passionate man; and so wedded to his own notions, upon whatever subject these might happen to be entertained, that it was, in his estimation, an offence of the most aggravated character to call them into question. His wife was an ignorant woman, always talking with a volubility painful to listen to, upon the two edifying subjects of housewifery and cookery. Nothing could exceed the energy with which she would expatiate upon the manner of serving up a good dinner,—being far better skilled in the cabala of meats and hashes, than in the mysteries of the “parts of speech.”

Mr. and Mrs. L—— had two daughters: the one, when first I knew them, having just turned

her thirteenth year, and the other nearly approaching her twelfth. These girls were both remarkable, but not more so than the difference of attachment observed towards them by their parents. The elder girl was rather stunted in her growth,—her neck being short, and there was a tendency to spinal contraction; but these imperfections were more than counterbalanced by a face of extraordinary beauty, with limbs of extreme delicacy and harmony of proportion. Her features beamed with intelligence; upon her broad, fair forehead, and in her mild, blue eyes, were seen at once placidity of spirit and gentleness of heart, that smoothed the one and imparted its mild-beamy glory to the other. Her small, gently-curved mouth, the arching lips of which seemed to have kissed a rose from the garden of the new-born earth, had so perfectly the half-pouting, half-smiling expression of a beautiful babe soliciting the maternal caress, that I never gazed upon her radiant but placid lineaments without having realized before me what my fancy had embodied of the cherubs of a better world. There was an essence in her beauty, if I may so express myself, that seemed to exhale with every smile, which was the pure, bright reflex of an innocent heart.

The exquisitely proportioned limbs of this slighted girl, harmonized with her sweet face; but the small

and somewhat ungainly figure, as she moved, was a sad set-off against the loveliness which, in all other respects, she possessed.

The father treated this amiable child with harshness, the mother with indifference, which attracted me towards her with more than common sympathy. In proportion as her parents were unkind, my little attentions were endeared to her; and whenever I entered the house, her eyes sparkled with a vivacity that instantly revealed the joy of her heart. Her sister, although fourteen months younger, was considerably taller and stouter, and indeed, might have been taken for the elder of the two. Young as she was, her figure had begun to assume a maturity unusual at her early age, and she was already what the friends of her parents called a fine girl. She was tall, and remarkably well-shaped. Her form was sufficiently developed to warrant the conclusion that she would be a handsome woman. Her face was round, her features small, her eyes animated, and her mouth generally curved into a smile. When she flung back from her handsome brow the bright copious ringlets of dark brown hair, and laughed with the energy of girlish delight at some animating image conveyed by her own fervid thoughts, she looked like a sweet vernal flower, blossoming upon the verge of the wilderness, where nature only had

fostered its growth,—watered by the pure dews of heaven, and fanned by its untainted breath. To see her glowing countenance, as she entered the house, fresh from her morning exercise,—the rich hues of life that tinted the whole healthy surface of her face and neck, would have inspired the painter with his sweetest enthusiasm. She appeared a perfect child of nature ; but, beyond the surface, the charm ceased. There was no moral beauty.

This girl had been criminally indulged ; she was, consequently, wayward and untractable. Her parents doated upon her,—and in proportion to their extravagant fondness for one child, was their unjustifiable indifference towards the other. The latter, however, did not repine. She loved her sister with a fondness so absolute, that nothing could shake it, and was gratified to perceive how completely that sister had absorbed her parents' affections. In her bosom, the fountain of jealousy was dry. She had not a thought in which her sister did not share, except such as might be calculated to give her pain. Her affections were requited feebly,—nevertheless she did not impute this to callousness of heart, but to the thoughtlessness of youth. Her mind was as far advanced beyond her years as was the person of her sister, whose intellects were not at all above the ordinary

standard; and her principles were as elevated as her mind was endowed.

I never visited this family that I did not behold with regret the culpable difference made between the daughters. I frequently expostulated with the parents upon the criminality of such unwarrantable injustice. The father would not condescend to vindicate his preference, but the mother often attempted to justify it, by declaring that the eldest girl was deceitful. 'Have you ever discovered her practising deceit?' I asked.

'Not exactly so,—but she is provokingly cold, and quiet, and so forth; and all this is put on only to make strangers take a fancy to her before Elvira, who is an unsuspecting, innocent, warm-hearted child; she loves her parents, and deserves that they should love her.'

'No doubt she may; but is that a reason why the older child should not be likewise loved? You advance no admissible reason for withholding your affection.'

'One has no control over one's feelings. Nature would not dictate preferences if they were not just.'

'But I deny that Nature does dictate preferences: it is prejudice, and not Nature, which operates in this instance; and to encourage pre-

judice is both unnatural and criminal. It is too common a practice with unreflecting people to attribute to Nature what is merely the consequence of their self-wills, and thus to cast over the evil suggestions of their passions the shield of moral necessity. Believe me, madam, we have no excuse for doing wrong; and the stale plea of irresponsibility, to which those resort who maintain that they can't help doing wrong, will be found but a poor justification at the last solemn assize, when, by deeds, and not by arguments, our final doom will be determined.'

'Well; I can't help thinking that she's deceitful; and while this impression is upon my mind, it is impossible I should love her as I do the younger girl.'

'But, admitting that you cannot love her, you can, at least, act justly towards her; and nothing will warrant your making a difference between the two sisters, unless you have stronger grounds than mere surmise for supposing that the one is better than the other.'

It was not difficult to discover that the elder daughter was the victim of prejudice,—a prejudice as unjust as it was unnatural.

I happened to call one morning, when the mother said to me, with an air of offensive triumph, 'There, Mr. ——! who is right now? Your favourite

Jane has shown how worthy she was of your good opinion. A disgraceful minx ! but I have given it to her in such a way, that she will remember it the longest day she has to live.'

I sought no explanation, but entered the back drawing-room, where I found the poor child in tears. Her face was flushed, and upon her cheek were three red marks, evidently the rude impressions of the fingers of a hand which had severely smitten her. The shoulders of the beautiful girl exhibited several discoloured ridges, evidently raised with a cane. I was shocked at witnessing with what severity she had been chastised.

'What has occurred,' said I, 'my dear child, that I behold you thus?'

'Oh, sir,' she replied, with earnestness, 'I did not take it, indeed I did not. How it came into my pocket, I cannot tell ; but I did not steal it. I have been severely beaten ; but I am innocent—indeed I am ;' and the big tears fell full and fast from her large, beaming eyes.

'But, tell me, what is it all about? Come, dry your tears ;—I am sure I may rely upon your stating the truth.'

She clung to my knees with an agony so unfeigned, and looked up into my face with an appeal so earnest, and then said, while her expressive eyes swam in a crystal flood, 'Will you believe me?'

I would have staked my life upon her innocence. Her feelings were too intense—her whole manner too real and impulsive for hypocrisy. It had the impress of Heaven's own truth—the beautiful truth of innocence, stamped upon it with a glow and colouring that could not be mistaken. I assured her of my confidence in her integrity. Having raised and seated her on my knee, she told me that her mother had that morning laid a sovereign upon the breakfast-table, and, quitting the room, found it missing on her return. Inquiries had been made throughout the house, but it was not to be found. 'At length,' she continued, 'my sister suggested that we should turn out our pockets, in order that no objection might be offered by the servants to undergo a similar examination; and, to my astonishment, the sovereign was discovered upon me. How it came in my pocket, I know not; but I am incapable of such an act as stealing a sovereign; I am, indeed.'

Saying this, with passionate energy, she threw her head upon my bosom, and gave way to a strong burst of emotion. I soothed her as well as I was able, and a painful suspicion crossed my mind. I was satisfied the child had been unjustly condemned, and could not help suspecting that the younger sister had been instrumental to the disgrace which had fallen upon the elder.

From this time I could perceive the girl's home was a perpetual scene of misery to her. I never called that I did not observe her countenance overshadowed with gloom. Her former sprightliness had departed. The light, joyous, sunny smile no longer lighted up her lovely features, and she became pale, thin, and dejected. It was painful to see her thus. She never murmured, nor would she confess that her parents were unkind; but the staid gravity of her demeanour, her timidity of approach, and the caution with which she spoke and acted—all told that there was an absence of perfect peace within. I was grieved to witness the change. Her parents seldom spoke to her without harshness—never with kindness; while the younger girl was praised for her beauty and talents, and petted, because she was wayward, peevish, and disagreeable.

The spoiled child, although her disposition did not improve under parental indulgence, gave promise of being a remarkably handsome woman. As her figure expanded, and she advanced towards maturity, her form assumed a beauty of proportion and a grace of contour, that rendered the parents vain, to a degree of fatuity, of their favourite, who, by the time she had reached her thirteenth year, was an object of universal admiration. The consciousness of her personal attractions, and the daily care

which her foolish mother took to remind her of them, rendered her vain, supercilious, and increased the acerbity of her temper. The elder sister regarded her with pride equal to her parents, although treated by her with frequent, sometimes with excessive, harshness.

This gentle girl was still considered as under an odium. The subject of the stolen sovereign was frequently alluded to, and her delicate spirit galled by the unkind implication. I was pained to see her unhappy, and determined to use my best efforts to ameliorate the present severity of her condition. She possessed quick talents, and a fondness for literature; and although now not much past her fourteenth year, her acquirements were nevertheless considerable. Knowing that a lady of distinction, at whose house I was in the habit of visiting, was in want of a governess for two very young children, I recommended Jane ———. Her parents appeared glad to get her out of the house, and she, rejoiced to escape from the perpetual insinuations made against her integrity, accepted the situation, at a small stipend. She was received with kind welcome, into the family of Lady ———, where she became a general favourite; and I was soon gratified at perceiving that the natural elasticity of her spirits had returned.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ELVIRA L——. — PREJUDICES AGAINST INOCULATION.—
THE SMALL-POX.—MATERNAL APPREHENSIONS VERIFIED.
A DISCLOSURE.—PARENTAL DISAPPOINTMENT.—EL-
VIRA'S RECOVERY.—DOMESTIC MISERY.

AFTER Jane —— had removed into the family of Lady ——, I saw her much less frequently than I had been accustomed to do when she resided with her parents; but I was pleased to observe, when I did occasionally see her, that she was improving vastly in personal appearance. She passed some months at Brighton with her young pupils. A celebrated physician there, being consulted upon the spinal deformity with which she was threatened, by a judicious course of treatment, it was gradually removed, within the space of a year and half after she quitted her parents' roof. She began now to grow tall, her figure assumed its natural proportions, and by the time she had attained her sixteenth year, she was as perfect in form as in feature. She was much smaller than the parents' favourite, and not so fine a girl, in the common acceptation of the term; but there was a delicacy and refinement in her beauty which altogether eclipsed that of her sister. Fortunately for

her, they lived apart, or this would only have been a bitter in the fountain, from which she imbibed a fresh and wholesome enjoyment.

Elvira L—— was now without a rival in her home, where not a wish of her wayward heart was opposed; and although scarcely fifteen, she had already won the affections of a young man of some property and good expectations, whom her parents had consented she should marry on attaining her seventeenth year. I was grieved to see the thorns which her weak parents were planting in the path of this giddy girl. I foresaw they would prove the roots of many a budding misery, which would eventually open before her in full bloom, and impart their dark hues to her future destiny. I used frequently to reason with her upon those growing asperities of temper, and that dogged decision of judgment, which were becoming spots in the newly-risen orb of her moral brightness, that threatened finally to eclipse it; but my admonitions were received either with indifference, or with that petulant rudeness which made me feel how little hope there was of opposing a successful dike to the torrent opened by parental indulgence.

I besought the father to curb the growing propensities of his child; but he treated my representations as monastic prejudices, and declared he would not crush the girl's spirit for the world. I im-

entertained against it, both by the child's father and mother.

Elvira sickened: a medical man was called in, who immediately pronounced that she had the small-pox. This was a fearful shock to the parents, who apprehended, at least, the loss of her beauty, if not of her life. I called on the very day this sad communication was made. The house was a scene of gloom. The mother dwelt, with sad distrust of Divine mercy, upon the melancholy consequences that would result to her favourite child, in case she should be seamed.

'Nay, my dear madam,' I said, 'suppose this should be God's will, assure yourself it can only be for a wise purpose; and your daughter may be a happier woman under the scars of this terrible disease, than she might under the dangerous influence of that vanity which beauty is so apt to foster.'

'But how shall I behold the dear girl's beautiful face seamed and scarred, and an object offensive to look on?'

'Do not imagine that her face will ever be unwelcome to look on, so long as her heart is the seat of virtue. We soon grow familiar with external deformity, and yield our real admiration to the beauty within.'

'I cannot think with you. It is such a blessing

But she is still admired—to hear her lauded, and her approbation sought.

But it is a higher blessing to see her admired for the noble qualities of her mind, than for the superficial graces of the body, -to hear her lauded for the purity of her heart than for the prettiness of her face, -and to have her approbation sought rather because she is a good Christian than a handsome woman.

And how much more would you would feel this way.

What a blessing it is to be admired for the noble qualities of the mind, than for the superficial graces of the body, -to hear her lauded for the purity of her heart than for the prettiness of her face, -and to have her approbation sought rather because she is a good Christian than a handsome woman.

And how much more would you would feel this way.

What a blessing it is to be admired for the noble qualities of the mind, than for the superficial graces of the body, -to hear her lauded for the purity of her heart than for the prettiness of her face, -and to have her approbation sought rather because she is a good Christian than a handsome woman.

And how much more would you would feel this way.

What a blessing it is to be admired for the noble qualities of the mind, than for the superficial graces of the body, -to hear her lauded for the purity of her heart than for the prettiness of her face, -and to have her approbation sought rather because she is a good Christian than a handsome woman.

And how much more would you would feel this way.

What a blessing it is to be admired for the noble qualities of the mind, than for the superficial graces of the body, -to hear her lauded for the purity of her heart than for the prettiness of her face, -and to have her approbation sought rather because she is a good Christian than a handsome woman.

And how much more would you would feel this way.

What a blessing it is to be admired for the noble qualities of the mind, than for the superficial graces of the body, -to hear her lauded for the purity of her heart than for the prettiness of her face, -and to have her approbation sought rather because she is a good Christian than a handsome woman.

And how much more would you would feel this way.

What a blessing it is to be admired for the noble qualities of the mind, than for the superficial graces of the body, -to hear her lauded for the purity of her heart than for the prettiness of her face, -and to have her approbation sought rather because she is a good Christian than a handsome woman.

of infection, she declared her determination of continuing in the sick chamber. She was not, herself, aware that she had been vaccinated ; but no apprehension of personal danger could keep her from the side of one, who, though she had not been over-affectionate, was still her sister.

The scene was of a character to inspire the deepest melancholy. I tried to console the parents, but without success. The father's grief was petulant,—the mother's querulous, and both seemed to think that the visitation of heaven was unnecessarily, if not unjustly, severe. My expostulations were pronounced professional,—my sincerity questioned, not directly, but by implication ; and my attempts to console considered officious. I made allowances for the excitement of grief, and was silent ; but did not quit the mourners. I felt that I had a duty to perform above the little mortification arising from doubted integrity, and resolved still to do all in my power to administer relief where I saw it would be soon required.

Towards the afternoon, the progress of the disease had advanced with rapid strides, and the virulence of the attack already began to manifest itself. The sufferer was restless, and her mind seemed to be labouring under some secret load of anxiety. She sobbed hysterically. Her family and myself were standing round her bed. Jane

was seized by her, holding her hot, spotted hand, and repeatedly whispering in her ear words of warning. 'The unhappy girl at length withdrawn her hand, and hiding her face under the bed-clothes, exclaimed with a burst of hysterical emotion,—"What a wretch I have been to wrong my innocent and good a sister!" She suddenly threw the bed-clothes from her head and chest, fixed her eyes with a piercing expression upon the countenance of her father, who was standing at the foot of the bed, and said, in a loud, guttural whisper, "Father, I have wronged dear Jane: she was innocent of the foul deed of which you suspected her, and which has ever since fixed your displeasure upon her. I stole the sovereign, and, fearing detection, dropped it into her pocket at the moment I was cursing her. Forgive me, Jane,—I am the criminal: forgive me father,—mother, pardon me: let me hear the words of forgiveness from the lips of each of you before I die."

She believed under the strong impulse of her love, was convinced to hear the words of a dying sinner. This appeared to the young lady of her mother, however, as a discovery of her criminality, and she did not deem it her duty to kindly suggestion of parental love. I was told, on the contrary, that she

favourite child was tainted with moral turpitude, from which the elder was entirely free. I confess, it rejoiced me to hear that the innocent Jane had received so unequivocal an exculpation. She fell upon her sister's neck, and ratified her forgiveness by a copious and earnest flood of tears. The invalid was calmed; she seemed as if her bosom had been relieved from a load which would have crushed her; but the parents were only rendered the more supremely wretched. They arraigned the dispensations of a wise and merciful Providence, in having given them children, which were to them a bane rather than a blessing; for they could not make up their minds to look upon the eldest girl with those deep and absorbing feelings which nature prompts in parents towards their offspring, when they are truly worthy. They had roused within their own bosoms the demon of dislike, and they could not banish it now.

From this time the invalid grew hourly worse. Her whole body was so thickly covered with pustules, that not a speck of its natural surface could be seen. The small-pox was of the confluent kind. Her face was so swollen as to obliterate every trace of beauty, and the deep red tinge with which it was overspread, rendered it only the more unsightly. For twenty-four hours not a ray of hope was entertained that she could survive the attack. She did



atures will everlastingly upbraid you with having imposed upon me the greatest temporal curse which can fall upon woman. You have been a bane, instead of a blessing, to me; and to you both I shall ever look as the source of all my misery.'

At length, the partiality of her parents began to give way before the perpetual moroseness of their indulged child. Their domestic repose was disturbed, and they now began severely to feel the punishment of having indulged so criminal a partiality. It was now too late to recall a past error. Their daughter had grown beyond the influence of their control, and she ruled them with a rod of iron. A blight had fallen upon their domestic peace, but they had vainly courted it, and were suffering the penalty.

7
7
7
7
7

Y



Mr. and Mrs. L—— removed to lodgings in a cheap house, in the purlieus of the metropolis, where I used still to visit them, unwilling to abandon my friends in their destitution, when I might benefit them,—if not by my advice and admonition, which were never very favourably received,—at least by that palpable mode of assistance which, to the needy, is more acceptable than the offerings of consolation, or the lessons of religion. I always found them in a state of grievous disunion. The father's morose-ness, and the mother's coldness, were such antagonist qualities, that peace was stifled between them; whilst the daughter's self-will, which neither parent had power to control, rendered their house a scene of perpetual anarchy. The girl's temper seemed to have soured with the departure of her beauty, and she had become an object of universal dislike.

Although, however, it was so evident that the parents had irretrievably ruined the temper of their youngest child, by immoderate and criminal indulgence,—nay, in spite of the ungrateful return she made to them, for years of anxious tenderness, their partiality towards her did not subside, nor did they feel an atom more affection towards the girl, who was a favourite with all who saw her, and so highly esteemed by the family that she had become domesticated, that no barrier was made betwixt her and her young

plored the mother to interpose her authority to check the overbearing disposition of her favourite; but she accused me of entertaining a prejudice against Elvira, and a partiality for Jane. Under this impression, therefore, my expostulations only served to strengthen her determination to allow the former to take her own course, and run the risk of falling over a precipice before she was aware of being near the brink. I deplored the blindness which I could not counteract.

An awful visitation, about this time, fell upon this self-willed girl.

Mr. and Mrs. L—— had always entertained an unaccountable prejudice both against inoculation and vaccination, in consequence of which they had determined not to employ those precautionary measures, now almost universally adopted, to mitigate one of the most awful diseases with which the Almighty, in his ineffable wisdom, has thought fit to visit mankind.

It happened that the eldest daughter had been on a visit to her mother's sister, in her fifth year: the small-pox being prevalent in the neighbourhood at that time, the aunt, as a measure of precaution, had her niece vaccinated with her own children. Of this circumstance the parents were not aware; Mrs L——'s sister never having mentioned the circumstance, knowing the prejudice

entertained against it, both by the child's father and mother.

Elvira sickened: a medical man was called in, who immediately pronounced that she had the small-pox. This was a fearful shock to the parents, who apprehended, at least, the loss of her beauty, if not of her life. I called on the very day this sad communication was made. The house was a scene of gloom. The mother dwelt, with sad distrust of Divine mercy, upon the melancholy consequences that would result to her favourite child, in case she should be seamed.

'Nay, my dear madam,' I said, 'suppose this should be God's will, assure yourself it can only be for a wise purpose; and your daughter may be a happier woman under the scars of this terrible disease, than she might under the dangerous influence of that vanity which beauty is so apt to foster.'

'But how shall I behold the dear girl's beautiful face seamed and scarred, and an object offensive to look on?'

'Do not imagine that her face will ever be unwelcome to look on, so long as her heart is the seat of virtue. We soon grow familiar with external deformity, and yield our real admiration to the beauty within.'

'I cannot think with you. It is such a blessing

to see one's child admired—to hear her lauded, and her approbation sought.'

'But it is a far higher blessing to see her admired for the noble qualities of her mind, than for the superficial graces of the body,—to hear her lauded for the purity of her heart than for the prettiness of her face,—and to have her approbation sought rather because she is a good Christian than a handsome woman.'

'You are not a mother, or you would feel differently.'

'But I am a man—a Christian, and a clergyman; and I, therefore, hope I feel as I need not be ashamed to feel, in each and all of those characters.'

My mode of offering consolation was not relished, and I soon took my departure, with a sad presentiment, however, that the worst fears of the unhappy mother would be realized.

I called the next day, and found the physician's prediction perfectly confirmed. The poor girl was extremely ill. Both her parents were in the room, and in tears. Jane had been sent for: she was seated by her sister's bedside; her cheeks suffused with the gushes of intense sorrow. She held Elvira's hand; and although the mother besought her to remove from the apartment to avoid the risk

of infection, she declared her determination of continuing in the sick chamber. She was not, herself, aware that she had been vaccinated; but no apprehension of personal danger could keep her from the side of one, who, though she had not been over-affectionate, was still her sister.

The scene was of a character to inspire the deepest melancholy. I tried to console the parents, but without success. The father's grief was petulant,—the mother's querulous, and both seemed to think that the visitation of heaven was unnecessarily, if not unjustly, severe. My expostulations were pronounced professional,—my sincerity questioned, not directly, but by implication; and my attempts to console considered officious. I made allowances for the excitement of grief, and was silent; but did not quit the mourners. I felt that I had a duty to perform above the little mortification arising from doubted integrity, and resolved still to do all in my power to administer relief where I saw it would be soon required.

Towards the afternoon, the progress of the disease had advanced with rapid strides, and the virulence of the attack already began to manifest itself. The sufferer was restless, and her mind seemed to be labouring under some secret load of anxiety. She sobbed hysterically. Her family and myself were standing round her bed. Jane

was seated by her, holding her hot, spotted hand, and occasionally whispering in her ear words of soothing. The unhappy girl at length withdrew her hand, and hiding her face under the bed-clothes, exclaimed with a burst of hysterical emotion,—‘What a wretch I have been to wrong so innocent and good a sister!’ She suddenly threw the bed-clothes from her head and chest, fixed her eyes with a piercing expression upon the countenance of her father, who was standing at the foot of the bed, and said, in a loud, guttural whisper, ‘Father, I have wronged dear Jane: she was innocent of the foul deed of which you suspected her, and which has ever since fixed your displeasure upon her. I stole the sovereign, and, fearing detection, dropped it into her pocket at the moment I was caressing her. Forgive me, Jane,—I am the criminal; forgive me father,—mother, pardon me; let me hear the words of forgiveness from the lips of each of you before I die.’

She fainted under the strong impulse of her feelings, but soon recovered to hear the words of pardon from every tongue. This appeared to compose her. The agony of her parents, however, at the mortifying discovery of her criminality, knew no bounds; but it did not obtain for the elder girl one kindly aspiration of parental love. They seemed mortified at the discovery that their

favourite child was tainted with moral turpitude, from which the elder was entirely free. I confess, it rejoiced me to hear that the innocent Jane had received so unequivocal an exculpation. She fell upon her sister's neck, and ratified her forgiveness by a copious and earnest flood of tears. The invalid was calmed; she seemed as if her bosom had been relieved from a load which would have crushed her; but the parents were only rendered the more supremely wretched. They arraigned the dispensations of a wise and merciful Providence, in having given them children, which were to them a bane rather than a blessing; for they could not make up their minds to look upon the eldest girl with those deep and absorbing feelings which nature prompts in parents towards their offspring, when they are truly worthy. They had roused within their own bosoms the demon of dislike, and they could not banish it now.

From this time the invalid grew hourly worse. Her whole body was so thickly covered with pustules, that not a speck of its natural surface could be seen. The small-pox was of the confluent kind. Her face was so swollen as to obliterate every trace of beauty, and the deep red tinge with which it was overspread, rendered it only the more unsightly. For twenty-four hours not a ray of hope was entertained that she could survive the attack. She did

survive it, however, but to become an object of piteous deformity. Her face was so frightfully seamed and scarred, that not a feature retained its original proportion. The corners of her eyes were drawn downward, and a hideous chasm was opened into her nose, by a contraction of the right nostril. Her lips were purple and drawn upward; and not a single vestige remained of that beauty which had obtained for this unhappy girl the general title of the lovely Elvira L——. She rose from her bed a blighted branch. All that remained of her former beauty was her figure, which had escaped the ravages of that dreadful malady, by which her once fine features had been so grievously disfigured.

Upon her recovery, her temper became soured: and, in proportion as the general admiration was withdrawn, her mortified vanity recoiled upon her excitable passions, which gave it a new impulse, and it vented itself in peevishness and ill-nature. She rendered her home a scene of incessant conflict, reproaching both father and mother as the cause of her present deformity. Pointing to her distorted lineaments, she taunted them with their criminal prejudice, in refusing to have her vaccinated when an infant. ‘See to what you have brought me,’ she cried vehemently, while tears trembled in the cavities of her unsightly cheeks; ‘these mangled

features will everlastingly upbraid you with having imposed upon me the greatest temporal curse which can fall upon woman. You have been a bane, instead of a blessing, to me; and to you both I shall ever look as the source of all my misery.'

At length, the partiality of her parents began to give way before the perpetual moroseness of their indulged child. Their domestic repose was marred, and they now began severely to feel the punishment of having indulged so criminal a partiality. It was now too late to recall a past error. Their daughter had grown beyond the influence of their control, and she ruled them both with a rod of iron. A blight had fallen upon their domestic peace, but they had wantonly courted it, and were suffering the penalty.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REVERSE OF FORTUNE.—ITS CONSEQUENCES.—MISFORTUNES.—THE LANDLORD'S SON.—THE MARRIAGE.—ELVIRA'S MISERY.—SISTERLY TENDERNESS.—MORAL CHANGES.—JANE L——'S MARRIAGE.—AND HAPPINESS.

A CLOUD now suddenly gathered over the house of Mr. L——. He was seized with ophthalmia, and in the course of a few months, became irremediably blind. His repinings were constant and impetuous. He was obliged to relinquish his employment under government, and to retire upon the small gratuity of forty pounds a year, having no positive claim for length of service. This was a dreadful stroke. Being a man of restless temper, without mental resource, he bitterly felt the severity of his bereavement. It came upon him like a blight from the desert, when the sky above appeared clear and unclouded. His wife was not a person to soothe him under the asperity of circumstances, and his daughter's frowardness was only another drop of gall in the now turbid current of his destiny, which flowed sluggishly forward, presenting everywhere the bitter with which the fountain had been drugged.

Mr. and Mrs. L—— removed to lodgings in a cheap house, in the purlieu of the metropolis, where I used still to visit them, unwilling to abandon my friends in their destitution, when I might benefit them,—if not by my advice and admonition, which were never very favourably received,—at least by that palpable mode of assistance which, to the needy, is more acceptable than the offerings of consolation, or the lessons of religion. I always found them in a state of grievous disunion. The father's moroseness, and the mother's coldness, were such antagonist qualities, that peace was stifled between them; whilst the daughter's self-will, which neither parent had power to control, rendered their house a scene of perpetual anarchy. The girl's temper seemed to have soured with the departure of her beauty, and she had become an object of universal dislike.

Although, however, it was so evident that the parents had irretrievably ruined the temper of their youngest child, by immoderate and criminal indulgence,—nay, in spite of the ungrateful return she made to them, for years of anxious tenderness, their partiality towards her did not subside, neither did they feel an atom more affection towards the elder girl, who was a favourite with all who knew her, and so highly esteemed by the family with whom she had become domesticated, that no difference was made betwixt her and her young

charges, in anything that regarded her social comforts.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. L—— expressed satisfaction at these tidings. The daughter seemed to feel a deep and almost savage envy as she reflected upon the difference of Jane's condition and her own. It was a melancholy thing to witness how the finest sympathies of her nature were gradually deadening in the bosom of this unhappy girl; and I frequently endeavoured to recall her from the obduracy into which her heart was perhaps insensibly lapsing; but she listened to me with impatience, though not with disrespect, and I perceived that my remonstrances made no effectual impression. They slid from the intractable surface of her mind, like water from the cygnet's wing; or, if they did produce any effect, it was that of increasing her frowardness.

The old saying, that misfortunes never come single, is founded upon a natural sequence of events, and is, therefore, no more than a very evident truism, which was never hidden in a well, but is always upon the surface, and obvious to every observer. The reason why misfortunes never come single, is, that every misfortune proceeds from a source where others are produced with it, and the moment one is matured, the rest follow in their regular succession. Besides, it is a continually

fructifying principle, and each new misfortune scatters around us the elements of many others, which are produced out of it.

Since her father's reverses, the home of Elvira L—— had been wretched. She was obliged to perform some of the household drudgery. Her music was given up for the more indispensable employment of the needle, or other necessary duties, arising out of those social restraints, which her father's blindness had imposed upon the family. This was repulsive to her proud spirit. She was continually complaining. Her petulance increased, and the miseries of her parents increased precisely in the same ratio. To them her temper was a severe test, at once of spiritual discipline and of domestic trial; but it failed in evolving any moral good, though it failed not to educe much evil.

The house in which Mr. and Mrs. L——, and their younger daughter lodged, was rented by a cabinet-maker, in a small but respectable way of business, whose son had just returned from sea, and was now living an idle life, upon the wages received for a twelve-month's voyage, as mate of a merchant-vessel. He was a bluff, sturdy, well-looking person, with that sort of superficial open-heartedness, which is rather a conventional characteristic of the sailor, than the natural quality of the man, and often obtains for him a sympathy which he as often

forfeits, by an indulgence in habits of low licentiousness.

This young man and Elvira L—— had occasionally met, but not the slightest suspicion was entertained that any intimacy existed between them, beyond that casual one naturally arising from the intercourse usual among friends dwelling in the same house. Mr. and Mrs. L—— were, however, one morning, shocked to find that their daughter was missing. In her room was found a note, signifying that on that very morning she was going to be married to their landlord's son. This, in fact, took place, to the deep mortification of both her parents. The only satisfaction that remained to them, amid their wretchedness, was the knowledge that their daughter was the man's wife; for, at first, they had feared she might have been worse.

The wretched consequences of this imprudent step too quickly followed. The vulgar husband began by beating his wife, and, after subjecting her to a course of ill-usage for several months, he deserted her, and she returned to her parents a sickly heart-broken mother.

The elder daughter, whom both father and mother had treated with such unkindness, was now their only comfort. She contributed greatly to their support, allowing them ninety pounds

a year, out of a salary of one hundred, which she received from her amiable and generous patron. She was beloved by all in the house, where she had found a comfortable home, since her retirement from her own family. She had marked the ways of Providence in the chastenings of mercy which had fallen heavily upon her unhappy parents; for this she expressed to me, when I saw her after their reverse of circumstances, and looked forward to the great moral results with an earnestness equalled only by the deep anxiety which she felt for the spiritual welfare of her family.

The younger daughter now, instead of becoming a solace to her unhappy parents, was to them a continual source of disquiet. She had brought upon them an additional incumbrance, that increased the privations under which, notwithstanding the aid derived from the salary of their elder girl, they laboured with painful repugnance. Poor Elyira had, however, become an altered person. The misfortunes which followed her own imprudence had subdued her spirit, and she bore the moroseness of her father, and the querulous repining of her mother, with a meekness that showed her failings had been the result rather of misguided indulgence, than the natural growth of her heart. As she looked on her infant, and thought upon the misery of which it was more than probably born to be the

victim, her heart was smitten with a pang of agony, and tears rolled fast over her sallow and scarred cheek. Her cup of sorrow was not yet full. Her husband, upon abandoning her, had associated himself with a gang of smugglers, and, in an encounter with the officers of excise, had been shot. Although he had used her with uniform unkindness, she could not but deplore the fate of a man sent thus untimely to his account, and that man the father of her babe.

I have seen her gaze upon her orphan child until her breast would heave, her eye droop, and her lip quiver with a paroxysm of sorrow that has frequently moved me to deep sadness; still she was subdued and resigned; but this change had not rendered her a consolation to her parents. When she was froward and tyrannical, they petted and yielded to her tyranny; now that she was resigned and enduring, they continually reviled her for the difficulties which they accused her of bringing upon them. Her home was, beyond description, wretched; and the only real kindness she received in her own family, was from that sister whom she had so unkindly,—so cruelly wronged. That sweet girl used to soothe her with a persuasion so endearing, as to prove a medicament to her fractured heart, and draw from her frequent and bitter regret at former injury. The visitation which had overtaken this family,

though it wrought a happy moral change upon poor Elvira, produced none upon her parents. They suffered; and, it must be confessed, they deserved to suffer. I never ceased to use my best endeavours to bring them to a sense of their errors, and to look upon the state of bereavement to which they had been reduced, as a chastening of transcendent Mercy. I pointed out to them the favourable effect produced upon the mind and heart of their daughter, Elvira, by the afflictions with which she had been visited. This seemed to make an impression upon the obdurate spirit of the father, and he admitted that some good had arisen out of the evil which had come upon them. Finding that his prejudices began to yield, I continually plied him with the best arguments at my command, to bring him to a better tone of mind; and I eventually succeeded. A severe illness, too, by which he was attacked, about this time, opened a passage to his conviction, and I had, finally, the gratification of seeing him an altered man. The wife, always implicitly guided by him, yielded as he yielded; and it at length became evident, that the heavy stroke of affliction which had fallen upon this suffering family, was the means of bringing 'the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.'

Poor Elvira suffered another shock from the chastening Hand, by which she had been so severely

tried and disciplined, for that inheritance preserved for the contrite in the kingdom of God's glory. The blast of death fell upon her babe; it was blighted in the bud. She mourned over it with silent but intense grief. It was summoned to a better home, and she gradually relinquished her sorrows for the solace which that reflection conveyed.

The climax of misfortune had now been reached, and the bright arm of mercy was lifted over the house of mourning. The stream of their sorrows had run to overflowing, until the fountain could afford no further supply.

About this period, a young man of wealth, in the habit of visiting at the house of Lady ——, fell in love with Jane. He made her an offer of his hand. He was all she could desire,—as good as he was wealthy; and within a few months after the offer had been made and accepted, they were united. She quitted her patron and pupils with regret, and with the blessings of the whole household. Her parents and sister were taken from their homely lodging, in the outskirts of the town, and placed in a comfortable house, near Brunswick-square, where the elder daughter now resided. They were generously allowed, by the husband, a yearly sum, which enabled them to live in far greater comfort than they had been accustomed to enjoy, even before Mr. L——'s blindness had obliged him to relinquish

his situation under government. Present prosperity, however, did not obliterate from their minds the lesson which adversity had taught them. Elvira was an altered woman, and freely admitted that her misfortunes had been to her the greatest earthly blessings;—that but for these, she should not know how to enjoy present prosperity. Mr. and Mrs. L—— united in the same sentiment. Their happiness increased with their years, and this they owed, under God's merciful dispensation, to that child whom they had once repudiated from their hearts; but they lived to see and acknowledge their error. I beheld the father die upon her bosom, blessing her with his last breath.

CHAPTER XXIX.

RECEIVE A SUMMONS TO VISIT AN INVALID.—THE INVALID'S NARRATIVE.—THE UNCLE AND FATHER.—MUTUAL ENGAGEMENTS.—AN ALTERCATION.—THE OLD MEN'S VIOLENCE.—THE NEPHEW.—A DISAGREEMENT.—THE UNCLE'S OBDURACY.—THE INTERDICTION.—THE OLD MEN'S RANCOUR.

IN my parish lived an elderly widow, with whom I had some slight acquaintance, from having occasionally visited her during periods of sickness. Her father had been a farmer in the North, and at his death, she being his only daughter, had left her a small income, upon which she lived. At the time I am now writing, she had charge of a niece, labouring under mental aberration, but perfectly harmless—a well-looking person, about the middle age, whose madness was that of melancholy. I had seen her from time to time, when I happened to visit the aunt, as she was permitted to go about the house uncontrolled, there being no appearance of insanity, except it was traced in the moody silence which she invariably maintained before strangers.

One day, in a violent fit of coughing, she burst a blood-vessel in the chest; inflammation and suppuration ensued, and her case soon became hopeless. I was sent for to see and pray with her. With the

approach of death the cloud had entirely passed from her mind. When I saw her, she was tranquil, collected, and perfectly sensible. As I sat on the side of her bed, she drew from under the clothes her small, attenuated hand, which rivalled the sheet in whiteness, and placed it languidly in mine.

‘My dear sir,’ said she, faintly, ‘I am sensible now. I know my last hour is come, but I am prepared; blessed be God for his mercy! I have no misgivings: still it would be a great consolation to me, if you would administer the Sacrament to a dying woman, who does not languish under the uncertainties of a feeble faith, but whose spirit is buoyed up upon the vigorous pinions of a holy hope.’

Nothing could exceed the calm, yet pious, assurance with which the invalid looked forward to her soul’s freedom from the trammels of the flesh. She received the Sacrament, and, at her own particular request, I saw her daily. One morning she had rallied a little, and I took the opportunity of asking her the cause of that melancholy which, for so many years, had overlaid her spirit.

‘It is a painful history,’ she replied; ‘but you shall hear it. Mine has been a life of little vicissitude, indeed, but it has known one great trial, which withered my peace, and bound my soul in the dark coil of madness, until the approach of death chased the demon from me, and set me free for that journey

which shall lead me to the paradise of God. I am rather stronger to-day, and, therefore, better able to enter into the gloomy narrative. It will, moreover, be a melancholy pleasure, before I die, to take a review of the past,—that past which has taught me a sad, but salutary lesson.

‘ I was born in Cumberland, and had a twin brother. We were the orphan children of parents in easy circumstances, who left us a small but competent income. We lived with an uncle, an inflexible man, who became our guardian on the death of our natural protectors. We respected him as a father, and obeyed him as such. In the neighbourhood lived a farmer, with two children,—a son and a daughter. We were play-mates together in infancy, and grew up with mutual regard, which ripened, at length, into a warmer feeling. The young men had an attachment for one another of the most ardent kind, and each, moreover, loved the sister of the other, which was reciprocated with equal fervour by those sisters.

‘ My uncle, and the father of the young man to whom my vows of unalterable attachment had been pledged, were upon, what was considered, friendly terms—that is, they nightly met at the village ale-house, where they had a private apartment, smoked their pipes together, and drank their quart of ale; though occasionally, by way of cementing their

friendship, such as it was, the quart was increased to two or three; and then it generally happened that dissension arose between them, which usually produced a feud of some days' duration, and it has even lasted for weeks. When this occurred, my uncle was usually so morose, that our home was rendered exceedingly miserable; but my brother used generally in the end to assuage the rancour of our guardian, by the blandness of his manners, and the patience with which he bore the old man's ill humour.

‘ It was, at length, settled that our respective marriages were to take place, and the day was even fixed. Nothing could exceed the joy which the prospect of domestic happiness mutually inspired. The girl upon whom my brother had bestowed his affection was a pretty, unpretending creature, as amiable as she was pretty, and as good as she was amiable. She loved him with an intensity seldom witnessed, and he requited her affection with equal warmth. Indeed, theirs was no common attachment, and in proportion to its fervour did they entertain hopes of a happy futurity both here and hereafter. Towards her brother my feelings were such as woman never could entertain but for one object. I loved him with a devotion which I cannot pretend to describe, perhaps too dearly, for my whole heart was bound up in him, though still I trust my soul was con-

secrated to its God, with that spiritual devotion, which is beside all human affections, yet never dead within the bosom that has felt the pure glow of religion. I had not given my heart to one who did not know how to value the boon. I was beloved—ardently beloved by the man of my choice; and nothing could surpass the delight with which we looked forward to the day fixed for the consummation of a double union.

‘One evening, about sunset, attracted by the balmy influence of the weather, I happened to be strolling past the public-house in which my uncle and his neighbour used generally to spend their evenings, when my attention was arrested by the sound of voices that seemed to me in fierce altercation. The window was open, and looked out upon a field, traversed by a pathway for foot-passengers through which I was at this moment passing. Before I reached the wall, my uncle’s voice caught my ear, evidently raised to a pitch of angry excitement. I mechanically paused to listen. I could not help it; there appeared to be a spell upon me. I was not actuated by idle curiosity, but impelled by an unconquerable impulse. I had to pass close under the window. When I reached it, I heard my uncle say, with a dreadful oath—‘We will soon see which is the best man. My nephew has never let any one touch him yet.’

‘But,’ replied the other, angrily, ‘had he encountered my son, he would soon have found his match, and more than his match, I reckon.’

‘Out, fool; you are drunk.’

‘That’s what I was just thinking of you; for I know you are a mighty valorous man when flush of ale, but a mere dunghill in the morning.’

‘We’ll see that.’

‘I now heard a struggle for a few moments; but it soon became evident that the landlord had entered and separated the contending parties.

‘Gentlemen, said he, “I must not have my house made a scene of such indecent uproar. If you are not quiet, I shall use no further ceremony, but turn you to door. You may fight as long, and talk as loudly as you like outside, but you shan’t stay brawling here.”

‘If I live to see to-morrow’s light,’ said my uncle, in a tone of fury, ‘my nephew shall fight your son with the broad-sword, and we shall then know which is the best man.’

‘With all my heart,’ roared the other, bursting into a savage laugh. ‘I like your broad-swords for this kind of work;—’tis the best way of settling a business.’

‘The landlord again interfered, and the parties were silent. I was terrified at what I heard, and made the best of my way home, under an excess of agitation

so painful, that I thought I should have fainted at every step. My terror was not to be dispelled. The two young men, whose father and uncle had protested that they should engage in a strife of arms, loved each other as brothers. They were, moreover, celebrated throughout the county as the best wrestlers, cricketers, and players at single-stick in the north of England. Many persons eminently skilled in these sports, had come from all parts of the country to contend with them, but had been invariably defeated. As they had always abstained from encountering each other, which of them possessed the superiority was not known, but they were considered to have equal skill, except at cricket;—in this game my brother was judged the superior.

‘When I related to him what I had overheard, he treated the matter lightly, saying, that it was a mere drunken brawl, which would be forgotten by the morning. I was rather quieted at seeing him look upon it so indifferently; nevertheless, I could not relieve my mind from the apprehensions which had taken possession of it. The passionate earnestness with which the old men had taunted and threatened each other, while they were evidently conscious both of what they said and did, led me to fear that the rancour of spirit by which I knew them to be frequently actuated, would break

out into positive violence; and this fear greatly added to my disquiet, whenever what I had overheard recurred to my recollection. I could not sleep.

‘The next morning my uncle joined my brother and myself at the breakfast-table. His countenance was stern, and even fierce. He continued silent; his eye fixed upon the floor, and evidently meditating some disagreeable communication. I endeavoured to dissipate the gloom which hung over him, but could not draw from him a single observation. He ate sparingly, and was manifestly a prey to disquieting thoughts. My brother made a few common-place observations, to which my uncle merely replied by a nod, immediately relapsing into the same moody silence. At length, suddenly raising his head, he said, in a sharp, quick tone, ‘Frank, would you see your old uncle insulted, without resenting it?’

‘Certainly not,’ replied my brother; ‘if my uncle was insulted without provocation, I would instantly punish the offender, unless he should choose to make a satisfactory apology.’

‘Apology—psha!’ cried the old man, peevishly, ‘what good is an apology, after a person has been injured?’

‘That, sir, depends upon the nature of the injury, the motive which dictated it, and a thousand

other things. If a man forgets himself, and does you a wrong, should he make you all the reparation in his power, I think you ought to be satisfied. It is true there may be wrongs of so foul a character, that nothing can make due atonement for them; but such are few and rare.'

'I have been abused, sir, and think that is what no Englishman ought to submit to; and I won't submit to it: I will be revenged. You, Frank, must see me righted.'

'That I will, sir, provided you have been unjustly dealt with. Tell me your insulter, and I will call him to an instant account.'

'Old F—— has not only insulted me, but called your courage in question. He has resolved to back his son against you, and I have pledged myself to back you against his son, with broadswords. You are both masters of that weapon. and we shall see which is the better man.'

'Nay,' said my brother, coolly, 'I shall never, without provocation, enter into deadly strife with the dearest friend I have upon earth, and merely to appease the spleen excited by a drunken brawl.'

'My uncle rose in great displeasure, and quitted the room. My brother went in pursuit of his friend, and, communicating to him what had occurred, found that he was already acquainted with the whole transaction of the preceding evening at

the public-house. His father had told him of his quarrel with my uncle, and insisted that he should fight the nephew without delay, in order that it might be decided which was the better man in the management of the broad-sword. He was very melancholy at his parent's determination, as he had almost a superstitious reverence for parental authority, and fancied nothing so sacred as filial obligation.

‘My brother exclaimed vehemently against the reckless brutality of a father wantonly exposing the life of his son, merely to appease the effervescence of drunken passion. ‘Never,’ said he, ‘will I contend, with the weapon of death, against a man whom I love as a brother. Neither uncle nor father shall induce me to place the life of my dearest friend in jeopardy.’

‘My uncle was furious when he heard my brother's resolution. He taunted him; he reviled him in terms no less aggravating than undeserved, but that produced no impression. His nephew was not to be seduced from his strong and virtuous purpose by the sinister ravings of a man who had only his own fatuitous and selfish revenge to gratify. My brother laughed at his guardian's revilings, and remained firm to his determination.

‘This unnatural schism between the old men

produced a painful effect upon the young ones. They grew by degrees more estranged. One was continually taunted by his father, the other by his uncle, with want of spirit. The former could not bear to live under the perpetual displeasure of his parent, and in consequence the friends met less frequently. This was a subject of distress to the younger members of both families.

After a while, the father of my affianced bridegroom, not only interdicted his son from seeing me, but swore, with a vehement oath, that we should never be united. This oath was held sacred by the son. He could not bear the idea that his parent should become forsworn, by any act of disobedience on his part. He therefore, henceforth ceased to visit me, which produced a corresponding coldness on the part of my brother, who, from this moment, discontinued visiting the sister of his late friend. This coldness gradually increased between the two young men, until, at length, when they met, nothing but common-place civilities passed between them.

‘To me, as well as to my brother’s plighted bride, the change was one of deep sorrow. We each felt ourselves to be the victims of other’s caprices, and the wrong was real agony to both. Matters went on in this way for some time. The

old men repaired nightly to the public-house, but no longer, as usual, occupied the same room. They occasionally crossed each other's path,—when bitter taunts, and as bitter recriminations, usually were interchanged. Their quarrel furnished the neighbourhood with matter for continual gossip.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BROTHER'S ABSENCE.—HIS RETURN.—COLDNESS BETWEEN THE FRIENDS.—THE CHALLENGE.—THE MEETING.—SKILL OF THE COMBATANTS.—FATAL TERMINATION.—ITS CONSEQUENCES.—THE FATHER'S AND UNCLE'S DEATHS.—MADNESS.—CONCLUSION OF THE INVALID'S NARRATIVE.—SHE RECEIVES THE SACRAMENT.—HER CONFIDENCE.—SHE DIES.—REFLECTIONS.—CONCLUSION

‘My brother now went on a visit to some relatives in a neighbouring county, hoping that the breach might be healed when the father and uncle no longer perceived any probability of their unnatural designs being realized. But the feud was too deep and bitter to abate: the fire was smothered, not extinguished. I saw no more the object of my heart's affections but casually, and then his manners were constrained, and even repelling. I felt that the link of tender sympathy, by which we had been attached, was snapped. From this moment I had a sad presentiment that we should never be united, and my unhappiness increased with the anticipation. I, however, did my best to struggle against the disappointment, still hoping that time might produce a change in the hearts of those who had been the cause of so much domestic distress.

‘My brother returned, after an absence of nearly three months; but matters wore precisely the same

aspect as when he quitted us. The coldness between the friends now daily increased; and the fire of rising jealousy of each other's prowess was perpetually fanned and kept alive by those who ought to have smothered it, and, instead of throwing the apple of discord before them, have encouraged their amity and cemented their mutual regard.

‘ About this time, a fair took place in the neighbourhood, where there was a match at single-stick played by the most skilful men in that part of the country. Upon similar occasions the two friends had invariably avoided encountering each other, and this was their intention now; but my brother having foiled every competitor, the father of my unhappy lover goaded his son to attempt to strip the laurel from his brow. Excited by his parent's taunts, he entered the ring to encounter the successful champion. My brother was roused by this unexpected collision with one for whom he had felt a sincere and enduring regard. The former friends had a long and arduous trial of skill; but, after a protracted struggle, the contest concluded without any decided advantage on either side. Having once engaged, feelings of rivalry daily grew stronger within the bosom of each. They now began to disparage each other. This hostile feeling was encouraged by the old men. It at length grew to such a height, that my brother

received a challenge from his rival, to contest the palm of superiority with naked broad-swords. The thing was kept perfectly secret. The old men exulted at what each conceived would be the probable issue.

‘ I knew nothing of what was about to take place, yet was sufficiently unhappy at the change which had come over my mortal destiny. I became thin and melancholy ; yet the evident alteration in my health did not appear to excite the sympathy of the man to whom my faith had been plighted, and I at length came to the conclusion, that he had relinquished me for some new object. The mortification was bitter ; but no sooner did this impression take possession of my mind, than it roused my pride, which kept me from sinking under the pressure of despondency : still I was a miserable woman.

‘ I now remarked that my brother was more than usually reserved ; but, whenever I attempted to draw from him the cause of his moodiness of temper, he answered me with an acerbity of tone to which I had not been accustomed, and it accordingly increased my unhappiness. I never for a single instant suspected what was about to take place, and yet I had frequently some painful misgivings of evil. I felt a weight at my heart, which I could not remove—an undefined apprehension of danger,

which I was unable to subdue, and yet for which I could see no assignable reason.

‘The day at length dawned—the day which cast a blight upon my future years, now shortly to terminate in death. I shall never forget that day. Its soft, clear dawn seems to mock my memory even now. The bright sun appears to laugh through the long past, and to fling his brilliant beams upon the field that was chequered with blood. I shudder, as memory reverts to a scene which my brain could not bear to dwell upon, and which at this distant moment, though rendered somewhat less horrible by the long intervening interval of years, is fresh with recollections that death only can obliterate.

‘I will relate to you the sad event, as it was told to me by my uncle, when writhing under those pangs of remorse to which he ultimately fell a victim. The combatants met in the remote part of a common, little frequented. They met in mortal combat; the father of the one, and the uncle of the other being the only persons present, besides the principals, upon this sanguinary occasion. The sun had just poured his level rays over the horizon, when the parties reached the ground. Those who had once been the dearest friends, were now about to join in deadly strife. When they met, each impulsively grasped the other’s hand, but a word

from my uncle subdued the rising ebullition, and they stripped for the encounter. There was a sadness in the countenance of both, which sufficiently showed with what a reluctance of spirit they were about to place each other's lives in jeopardy.

‘ They commenced the encounter with extreme caution, on either side, displaying all the skill for which they had acquired so much celebrity. There was greater anxiety in both to exhibit that skill, without inflicting a wound, than to do one another a mischief. They continued their play for some time, with equal advantage, not much to the satisfaction of the two spectators, who looked savagely on, watching every thrust and foil with an impatience for the result, as unnatural as it was furious. At length my brother inflicted a slight flesh-wound in the arm of his adversary, which gave an instant impulse to the spirit of the latter, and he pressed forward with a vigour that showed a strong desire of retaliation. My brother foiled all his lunges, and parried every stroke, with deliberate and wary skill. Excited at length, by the pain of his wound, and the consciousness of his rival having obtained a slight advantage over him, he advanced with increasing vehemence ; but, finding all his efforts unavailing, his attack became so fierce, that my brother, seeing he was really anxious to take his life, purposely dropped the point of his

sword, received that of his opponent into his heart, and fell dead. The wretched survivor so sooner saw what he had done, than he was seized with frantic remorse. My uncle rushed to his nephew, and raised him from the reeking earth. The blood streamed from his bosom. The heart had been reached, and its pulses were now still. The eye was fixed, and there was an expression upon the countenance of sad, but mild, reproach.

‘ The father ran to the son, and embraced him in an extacy of ferocious triumph, but the wretched young man pushed from him the hoary savage, raised the point of his weapon to his own breast, with a bitter curse, and instantly fell upon it. The parent shrieked, and held out his arm to stay the stroke ;—it was too late. The fatal instrument had transfixed his son, and the father and uncle were left to that remorse which was the awful penalty of their future days. They were tried for their lives, and acquitted for want of evidence. The old men were henceforth despised and loathed, —being shunned as murderers, whom the law had failed to punish, but from whose souls the moral guilt could never be purged out.

‘ The news of this fatal event soon reached the ears of myself and the unhappy girl to whom my brother had been affianced. Upon her its effect was dreadful. She never from that moment held

up her head. She drooped until consumption seized her, when she rapidly declined, and at length closed her sorrows in a premature grave, in her one-and-twentieth year. She did not murmur. The worm was in the bud, but she told not that it was there; and while the sap of life was gradually drained, she bore the pangs of a severe and lingering disease with a fortitude and sublime submission to the Divine will, that showed by how elevated a hope her soul was sustained. Life had ceased to possess for her a charm, and she looked forward to death as a boon. The boon came, and she was laid in the cold grave, by the side of him she had loved in life, and to whom she was united in death.

‘The father of the young man to whom I had been engaged, knew no peace from the hour of his son’s death. In order to drown all recollection of the past, he became a confirmed drunkard, and was continually intoxicated: but there were, nevertheless, moments when the dark pictures of memory arose, with hideous reality, before him, and probed him to the very soul. The demon of remorse was so busy within him that, in spite of his habitual intemperance, he could not still its frightful whisperings. His dreams were his torments. He was haunted by the scene, which was too vivid and too harrowing for oblivion to invest with its shadows. There was no forgetting it. It was the vulture of

his waking thoughts,—the spectre of his unquiet dreams. He was found one morning dead by the road-side. He had evidently died of apoplexy on his way home from the public-house, under the influence of intoxication.

‘ My uncle’s was, if possible, a still more wretched end. He was so haunted by remorse that his life became insupportable. He was constantly muttering to himself the maledictions which his disturbed fancy conjured up. He lost his appetite, grew dejected and sullen, avoided society, and spent his whole time in wandering alone into the woods, cursing in bitterness of spirit his own savage nature, in having been the cause of so horrible a catastrophe. His life was a burden, still he bore the dreaded load only because he feared to shake it off. He felt how unfit he was to die, and yet to him life was one enduring agony. He had no respite from the war within. His spirit had not a single interval of repose. He longed for a release from so great an accumulation of mental suffering, yet dreaded the coming of such a release.

‘ One evening, however, during a paroxysm which he could not subdue, he flung himself from a cliff, and his body was found the following morning, shockingly mutilated. Such was the end of these unhappy old men. They perished unregretted, and not a creature attended them to their graves. My

sorrow was silent, but profound. I soon sank into a state of morbid melancholy, from which I found it impossible to rouse myself, and this eventually ended in complete aberration of mind. As the lapse of my intellects was gradual, my hand was sought by several suitors, some months after the melancholy death of my brother and his friend; but my heart had no room for a second affection. It was seared and blighted. I determined to consecrate my days to the trial by which I had been overtaken, but I could not endure the severity of the privation, and my intellects gave way. Even amid the incoherencies of madness, never for a single instant has the one absorbing idea passed from my mind. The image of that death which had wrecked my senses, was ever vividly present to them; and I cherished it as the root and sap of a wretched existence. My income was fortunately sufficient to raise me above the possibility of want, and as my natural guardian was dead, and my madness of a most harmless kind, my aunt, with whom I have been living for several years, took charge of me. With her I have found as comfortable a home as the nature of my condition would admit. She has borne with my caprices, and all the distressing vexations of my disorder, with a patience and a kindness which I can never repay; but she will be requited at the hand of Him who visits the merci-

ful with His mercy, and the benevolent with His favour.

‘ I am sensible that the hour of my departure is at hand. The restoration of my reason is a sure precursor of death, to me a release from overmuch sorrow, bringing with it too, as it does, an assurance of better things. In truth, I long to die, if it be God’s will, and I bless him for the visitation. In my own case, sir,—in the whole of what I have related to you,—I have seen the sad issues of vice; and if the innocent in this world suffer for the offences of the guilty, it is only that they may, the more speedily, or the more effectually, be introduced to the possession of “ those joys unspeakable and glorified, which the Lord has prepared for them that love him.” ’

The sufferer ceased ; but the exertion had so enfeebled her, that I quitted the room, hoping she might be recruited by a brief repose, though she was evidently near her last hour. Her narrative had saddened me. It was altogether a strange but fearful tale, and brought to my mind, with sorrowful distinctness, a practical proof of what I have so frequently witnessed during my professional career,—that the happiness of the many is too commonly marred by the wickedness of the few. How often do we see one member of a family set the whole at

variance, and make that home a wilderness of dis-sension, which otherwise might have been a paradise of peace.

On the following day, I called and administered the Sacrament to the dying Christian. She was composed, but much weaker than on the preceding day. She received the consecrated elements upon her knees, weak as she was; and it astonished me to see with what resolved energy she supported her feeble frame during so long a service. She assured me that she felt refreshed both in body and in spirit, and spoke of her departure with a sober cheerfulness, which showed her perfect confidence of being numbered with the glorious company of heaven. It scarcely seemed to her an effort to converse upon those topics which most interested her, because, though her earthly tabernacle was tottering to its fall, yet was her spirit strong in faith, and buoyed up by the influence of a righteous hope.

‘Dear sir,’ she said to me, ‘what a blessed thing it is to be prepared, when the summons is issued for our departure from a scene of things which we have experienced, to one which we have not! Those who have nothing they can desire to live for, need not fear to die. I rejoice to say, I have no fears. I feel that I shall be happy, and

those feelings will not be found liars. The Almighty would not permit us to be buoyed up with false hopes.'

'No!' I replied, 'that confidence which the true Christian entertains, at the hour of death, of a removal from temporal sorrows to eternal joys, may fairly be considered a pledge of their possession. The wicked have no such confidence. I have never attended an unrighteous death-bed, where doubts did not overlay the sinner's best hopes, and invest them with the gloom of fearful uncertainty.'

'I trust mine is not a presumptuous security, for it is with the deepest humility that I entertain it. I feel that it is the blessed work of Him whose "property it is always to have mercy."'

She became exhausted with the exertion of speaking. I prayed and read by her for some time. She thanked me, and, pressing my hand, said—

'I think, my dear sir, I shall not live to see another day. My exhaustion seems to increase every hour; but I am free from pain, which is one among God's manifold and great mercies. I shall shortly be with those whom I loved when they were in the flesh, where, I trust, we shall "hold sweet communion together,"—where there will be no abatement either to the joy or to its duration.'

I rose to depart. She thanked me fervently for my attention, and begged that I would include

her in my prayers. A smile was on her faded cheek as I quitted the room. I never saw her again alive. As she had foretold, she died during the night; and the next morning I gazed upon her corpse, still as the sculptured marble, but no less beautiful in death. Her history had greatly interested me. It was a sad one; but conveyed a lesson and a moral, for which, I am sure, I was the wiser, and, I trust, the better. It dwelt upon my memory with that sort of vital recollection which one seems to feel can never die; and I looked upon the death of that amiable sufferer as furnishing a brilliant example for my own. I have often, and earnestly, exclaimed, amid the sacred silence of my own thoughts, and with that mute fervour only known to God and my own heart—‘May my last end be like her’s!’

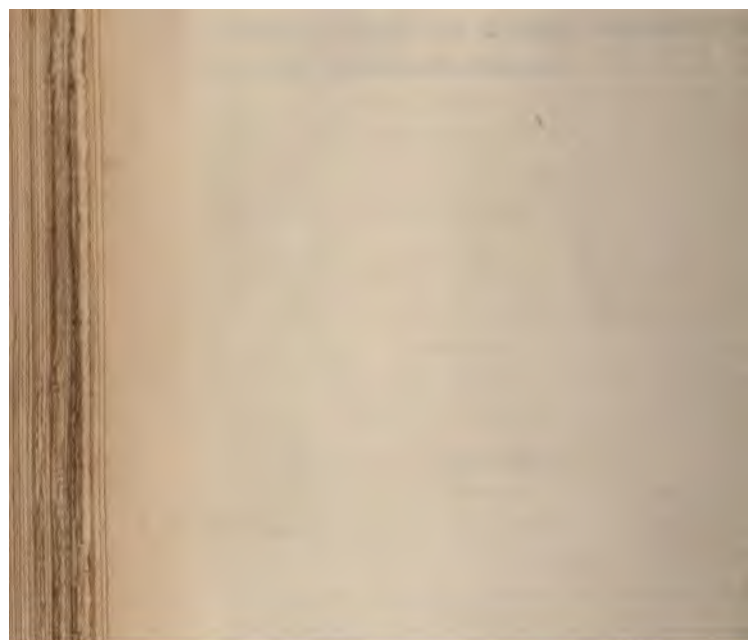
I know of nothing, in the long and varied catalogue of human events, that has so powerful an influence upon our moral feelings, as the sight of a fellow-creature’s dissolution. The instant transition from life to death, from motion, consciousness, volition, and all those beautiful faculties which are the attributes of life, to a mere inert mass of spiritless matter, is, at all times, an affecting spectacle. And then the reflections which it suggests; the condition to which the departed soul may be destined—whether, at the moment of

its quitting the body, it may be freed from its mortal prison for a liberty eternal in the heavens, or consigned to a bondage that shall extend beyond all limits of duration, and never know abatement.

I have witnessed the death-bed of the sinner, who has died without a holy expectation. I have seen him writhing in his mortal agony; his spirit, at the same time, overborne by those dark apprehensions which ever crowd upon the minds of the despairing at their last hour. I have witnessed his death-struggle,—that desperate strife with the great conqueror,—the horrible victory won over a soul that had no hope, and a body steeped in the blackest hues of guilt! To form an adequate notion of such a scene, it must be witnessed. Words can but convey a feeble picture; the reality is beyond their reach. I have likewise seen those summoned to their reckoning whose lives have been such as to warrant the expectation of an entrance into heavenly joys. And what a contrast! The beautiful fervour of confidence, subdued by the humility of conscious unworthiness, but still strengthened by a most holy faith; the humble reliance upon Divine mercy, through Divine merit; the calm, secure, reposing upon a Saviour's love and a Redeemer's expiation:—these symptoms of a blessed foretaste of the heavenly inheritance, I have witnessed at the expiring Christian's death-bed, and it has often been a balm to my own soul.

I bless God daily that he has numbered me among his ministers. It has brought before my eyes scenes by which I have been improved,—my own probation has been rendered the more easy, and temptations less difficult to overcome. Still I have ‘nothing whereof to boast,’ but ardently pray that I may ‘continue faithful unto the end.’

THE END.



BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND, LONDON.

Those to which a * is prefixed, are published under the Direction of the Committee of General Literature and Education, and are upon the Second Supplemental List of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

POSTHUMOUS RECORDS of a LONDON CLERGYMAN. Edited by the Rev. J. HOBART CAUNTER, B.D., Author of the *Oriental Annual*. 7s.

THE object of this work is to enforce some of the sublime truths of Christianity, by showing, in the way of practical illustration, the issues of moral good and of moral evil. Punishment in this world, in some shape or other, sooner or later, hidden or overt, positive or indirect, bodily or mental, is the never-failing consequence of guilt,—

Reward, of innocence. Trace how we may the course of human events, the tendency of human actions, the same results follow,—they all operate to the same end: the former to promote virtue and discourage vice; the latter to produce happiness and ensure misery, according as men incline to the one or to the other.

PALEY'S EVIDENCES of CHRISTIANITY EPI- TOMIZED; and his Argument exhibited in a small compass, without omitting or weakening any of its component points. By a MEMBER of the UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE. In a Pocket Volume. 5s.

As the Gospel is the most invaluable blessing that has ever been bestowed upon man, so it is the duty of every one who is capable of appreciating the arguments which establish its claims to reception, to make himself sufficiently acquainted with them, and thus fulfil the apostolic injunction, by being enabled to "prove all things," and prepared to "hold fast that which is good," with the steadiness which arises from calm inquiry, and decided conviction consequent thereupon. Hence it is highly desirable that the Evidences of

Christianity should be comprised in as condensed a form as is compatible with the clear and precise exhibition thereof, in order that they may be more extensively read and more easily remembered. Dr. Paley's work was doubtless written under this impression. Under the same impression, the present Epitome was compiled, with the design of presenting his argument in as small a compass as possible, without omitting, rendering indistinct, or weakening any of its component points.

THE OLD and NEW POOR LAW: Who Gains? and Who Loses? Explained by Conversations on Facts of Daily Occurrence. 6d.

THIS little work is addressed to the Working Classes, and to their Friends. Among the latter, the writer would rank himself; and he feels assured that he cannot prove his title to the name better than by endeavouring to make that clear to others, which is established in

his own mind,—namely, that the late alterations in the Poor Law are founded in wisdom and benevolence, and that the honest and industrious labourer will be the very first who will feel the advantages resulting from the change.

NATIONAL EDUCATION, and the MEANS of IMPROVING IT. By the Rev. T. V. SHORT, B.D., Rector of Bloomsbury. 1s.

THE PROPHETICAL CHARACTER and INSPIRATION of the APOCALYPSE considered. By **GEORGE PEARSON, B.D.**, Christian Advocate in the University of Cambridge. 10s. 6d.

THERE is no portion of Holy Scripture which has either been more violently assailed by Infidels, or has suffered more from the attempts of injudicious expositors, than the Apocalypse. This has, in a great measure, arisen from persons not duly considering the character and object of the revelations which are contained in this mysterious book; and, consequently, the principles of interpretation which are applicable to it. It is the intention of the present work to inquire, *first*, what was the great object of prophecy from the beginning; and, *secondly*, what are the principles on which the Apocalypse is to be explained, considered as a portion of the great scheme of prophecy. These

principles are then applied to the exposition of the prophecies of the Apocalypse; and, *lastly*, it is attempted to consider the argument for the inspiration of this book, which is derived from the consideration of its prophetic character, and of the doctrines which are contained in it; and thus to direct the attention of Christians to a more diligent study of this important prophecy, which is the great store-house of the destinies of the Christian Church to the end of all things; and which comes to us under the express sanction and authority of Him who is the Author of our faith and the Finisher of our salvation.

MUSICAL HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, and CRITICISM; being a General Survey of Music from the earliest period to the present time. By **GEORGE HOGARTH.** 7s. 6d.

AT a period when Music is more and more extensively cultivated as a branch of polite knowledge, as a powerful aid in the exercises of devotion, and as a rational and elegant recreation in social and domestic life, a work like the present appears to be called for. The Author's object is, to give, in an original and attractive form, that information respecting the progress of Music, the personal history of the most eminent Musicians, and the present state of the art in this and other countries, which is now looked upon as indispensable to every person of liberal attain-

ments: he has accordingly treated Music, not as an intricate science, but as one of the most beautiful of the Fine Arts.

The work contains an account of the state of Music among the ancients, and of its revival in the middle ages; a history of its subsequent progress in Italy, Germany, France, and England; and a view of its present state in all these countries, but more especially in our own. It embraces Biographical Sketches of the greatest Musicians, and critical observations on their most remarkable productions.

A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION to ENGLISH COMPOSITION; founded on PARKER'S PROGRESSIVE EXERCISES, and comprising the whole substance of that valuable Work. By the Rev. **J. EDWARDS, M.A.**, Second Master of King's College School, London. 2s. 6d.

IN addition to other pursuits and studies, cultivation of a knowledge of English Literature is daily gaining ground. This, it must be acknowledged, is very desirable; but it is assuredly of great importance, that it should be upon a plan which will tend to give a vigorous and healthy tone to the mind.

This result forms the peculiar excellence of the acquisition of a knowledge of the languages of Greece and Rome; but it is believed that the well-directed study of English is capable of almost as important effects upon the judgment and understanding.

TALES AND STORIES FROM HISTORY. By
AGNES STRICKLAND. Two Volumes, with many Engravings.

THE object of these Tales is to impart at once instruction and amusement to the youthful mind. Each of these stories is either founded upon, or connected with, some important event in History, and furnishes useful and entertaining information as to the Manners and Customs of the peculiar era to which it relates. This is conveyed in language sufficiently simple to be adapted to the comprehension of children at a very early age; but, at the same time, it is hoped that the Tales will be found interesting to readers at a much more advanced period of life.

These Tales are by no means intended to supply the place of History. They are, on the contrary, calculated to create

a taste for that style of reading, by indulging the juvenile reader with an attractive portion of its choicest flowers, arranged in the tempting form of Stories. In addition to this, every Tale is rendered the vehicle for introducing some moral lesson, calculated to improve the heart, and to impress the tender mind of Childhood with a love of virtue.

Such being the object of these Tales, it is to be hoped that they will be found not only essentially useful, but sufficiently attractive, to the young, as to supersede the use of many of the silly and pernicious fictions which have hitherto, unfortunately, constituted too large a proportion of the books provided for the use of young people.

FABLES and MORAL MAXIMS, in PROSE and VERSE.

Selected by **ANNE PARKER.** With One Hundred Woodcuts. 3s. 6d.

WITHOUT insisting upon the value of Fables in the direct business of education, the pleasure with which they are almost universally perused by young people, and the agreeable facility with which they may, consequently, be made the medium of a certain kind of instruction, cannot be denied. It, however, singularly happens, that, of the numerous collections published from time to time, a large majority, and particularly some which are known as School Editions of *Æsop's* and of *GAY's FABLES*, abound in subjects and expressions, not merely repulsive from their coarseness, but more gravely objectionable from their anti-social, and, frequently, immoral tendency.

The grounds of such objections have been avoided in the present collection, into which it is hoped and believed that nothing has been admitted of which parents and teachers will disapprove. Most of the favourite old Fables in the best collections are retained; but, in accordance with the plan of this work, the liberty of altering objectionable passages has been freely exercised.

Some pieces are given which have not before been published in any popular volume; translations and original compositions have also been occasionally introduced; and, in addition to these, selections made from *KRUMACHER's* German Parables, and from *DODSLEY's* "Economy of Human Life."

* **A FAMILIAR HISTORY of BIRDS: their Nature, Habits, and Instincts.** By the Rev. **EDWARD STANLEY, M.A., F.L.S.**, Rector of Alderley, Cheshire. Two Volumes, with many Engravings. 7s.

THIS work is intended for a class of readers to whom mere scientific details would be unacceptable, if not unintelligible. Such therefore have been, as much as possible, avoided, and only alluded to as inducements to those who are interested in the subject, to make further progress in so attractive a department of Natural History.

There are few individuals who have it not in their power, occasionally, to remark the instincts and habits of

Birds; and the many anecdotes collected from the Author's own observation, the information of friends, or various respectable sources, will, it is hoped, excite others to register any facts within their reach, which may illustrate the mysterious economy whereby this beautiful portion of God's creation is enabled, in so many instances, to surpass the highest efforts of man's ingenuity, foresight, or philosophy.

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY

*** DOMESTICATED ANIMALS** considered with reference to Civilization and the Arts. 3s. 6d.

THIS work will comprise a general survey of Domestic Quadrupeds, and the purposes they subserve in the great economy of nature: their connexion, too, with the progress of civilization and the arts, with the history of nations, and the peculiarities of soil and climate, are also specified; those countries which

are rendered habitable only by the subjugation and appropriation of certain species, are generally described, with the manners and habits of the natives, as far as they are associated with the history of Domestic Animals.—*Introduction.*

*** CONVERSATIONS of a FATHER with his CHILDREN.** Two volumes, 5s. 6d.

THESE Conversations were first written with a view to the gratification and improvement of the Author's children. They are now published with the sincere desire that the perusal of them may afford to others also somewhat of pleasure and advantage. The principles here inculcated are those of the Religion of the Gospel. The little work is intended to promote cheerful and fervent piety, a contented, obedient, and grateful frame of mind, feelings of affec-

tion and kindness towards our friends and of active benevolence towards all. The habit, too, of deriving instruction and delight from contemplating the varied scenes of nature, and the ordinary occurrences of life, it is hoped may, at the same time, be instilled and cherished; whilst the maxim, the spirit of which the Author trusts will be found to breathe through the whole, is **BE GOOD AND BE HAPPY.**

*** SISTER MARY'S TALES in NATURAL HISTORY.** 2s. 6d.

IN drawing up these tales for children at an early age, the writer has aimed rather at correctness than at variety of information, or originality of matter. She has endeavoured to *interest* her young readers, yet she has been very careful not to *mislead* them by exaggerated statements, and has thought it best to leave for after-years, and for graver works, much that is undoubtedly

curious, and deserving of their inquiry: satisfied if she has in any degree succeeded in awakening the spirit of that inquiry, and, still more, if she has directed the infant mind to seek for those proofs of Divine wisdom, power, and goodness, in the formation and habits of these various beings, which at a mature age will assuredly reward the study of the naturalist.

*** SCENES and SKETCHES from ENGLISH HISTORY.** With ENGRAVINGS. 3s. 6d.

IT is our purpose to narrate the principal and most interesting events in the annals of England; not to reject any topic connected with them which is likely to entertain and instruct: Religion, Literature, Customs, and Manners; to avail ourselves of authentic private memoirs and anecdotes of celebrated personages; sometimes to comprise the history of many years in a brief passing notice; at others, to dwell

for a considerable period on that of a few weeks, or even of a single day. Rejecting, in short, all the trammels of the regular historian, and rejoicing in the liberty of our own far humbler literary station, we do not intend to impose any restraints upon our wanderings, save those of strict chronological arrangement, and an undeviating adherence to guides of acknowledged authority.—*Introduction.*

*** THE CRUSADERS, or SCENES, EVENTS, and CHARACTERS, from the TIMES of the CRUSADES.** By THOMAS KEIGHTLEY, Esq. Two volumes, 11s.

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

CONVERSATIONS on GARDENING and NATURAL HISTORY. By the AUTHOR of the **ELEMENTS of BOTANY.** 2s. 6d.

To render that most rational and innocent of occupations attractive to young persons, by divesting it of its technical details, and its practical difficulties, is the object of this publication. The form of CONVERSATIONS is assumed, as more

agreeable than didactic precepts; and incidental observations on Natural History are interspersed, to vary the subject, and to lead the young reader to habits of observation and reflection on the WONDERS of CREATION.

*** READINGS in BIOGRAPHY.** A Selection of the Lives of the most Eminent Men of all Nations. 4s. 6d.

THE design of this work is to give an account of the lives of the leaders in the most important revolutions which history records, from the age of Sesostris to that of Napoleon. Care has been taken to select those personages, concerning whom information is most required by the historical student. All

the lives have been compiled from original sources; those of the Oriental Sovereigns, especially, are taken from Oriental writers; and in the life of Saint Louis are some curious particulars of the Egyptian Crusade from contemporary Arabic Historians.

*** READINGS in ENGLISH PROSE LITERATURE;** containing choice Specimens of the Works of the best English Writers, from LORD BACON to the present time. With an **INTRODUCTORY ESSAY on the PROGRESS of ENGLISH LITERATURE.** 4s. 6d.

THIS volume is intended to furnish the general reader with some valuable specimens of English prose composition. They are taken from the works of those writers who have chiefly determined the style of our prose literature, and not only in themselves instructive and entertaining, but are also of sufficient variety, and of ample length, to render

the reader familiar with the beauties and the peculiarities of the various writers. Biographical sketches of the authors, and notices of the times wherein they flourished, are also introduced, and upon the whole, it is hoped, that the volume will be found a useful introduction to the systematic study of our national literature.

*** READINGS in POETRY.** A Selection from the Works of the best English Poets, from Spenser to the present times; and Specimens of the American Poets. With Literary Notices of the Writers, and brief explanatory Notes. 4s. 6d.

CARE has been taken to select such pieces and passages as best illustrate the style of the respective Authors, and are, at the same time, not beyond the

average capacity of youthful students. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the most scrupulous attention has been paid to the moral character of the extracts.

*** READINGS in SCIENCE;** being **EXPLANATIONS** of some of the most interesting **APPEARANCES** and **PRINCIPLES** in **NATURAL PHILOSOPHY**, expressed in simple Language, and illustrated by familiar Examples. 5s.

THIS volume differs materially from previous publications having the same object, namely, that of rendering the path of science easy and inviting to beginners. The chief differences will be found, in the order of the subjects,

in the manner in which they are treated, in the examples by which principles are illustrated, and in certain reflections and remarks, not generally introduced into scientific writings.

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY

*** LIVES of SACRED POETS.** Containing **INTRODUCTORY SKETCH of SACRED POETRY.** GEORGE WITHER, FRANCIS QUARLES, GILES FLETCHER, GEORGE HERBERT, RICHARD CRASHAW. By R. A. WILLMOTT, Esq., Trinity College Cambridge. 4s. 6d.

THE writer of these Lives has endeavoured to present as ample a view as the limits of a volume would permit, of the state of Sacred Poetry in the reigns of Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the First. Among the poets and distinguished individuals, of whom Biographical and Critical Sketches are given, may be enumerated R. Southwell; H. Constable; B. Barnes; Francis Davison, the author of some exquisite Versions from the Psalms; Donne; W. Browne, the sweetest disciple of Spenser's Pas-

toral School; Sir John Denham; Heywood, the author of the *Hierarchia of the Blessed Angels*; G. Sandys; Lord Bacon, the friend of Herbert; Hobbes, the philosopher, and Ben Jonson, his associate in the translation of the *Advancement of Learning*; the celebrated Lord Herbert of Cherbury; the accomplished and learned Selden; Archbishops Williams and Laud; Lord Pembroke, the lover and loved of poets; Cowley, the affectionate friend of Crashaw, &c.

*** LIVES of EMINENT CHRISTIANS.** By the Rev. R. B. HONE, M.A., Curate of Portsmouth. Two vols. 9s.

THE paths of good men are commonly so full of peace, and the sorrows which befall them, so mercifully softened and blessed by a sacred influence, that few

more pleasing or successful ways of recommending the fear and love of God have been found, than the publication of religious biography.

CONTENTS: The Lives of BISHOP WILSON; ARCHBISHOP USHER; DR. HAMMOND; JOHN EVELYN; BERNARD GILPIN; PHILIP DE MORNAY; BISHOP BEDELL; and DR. HORNECK.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS; or, the RECORDS of a VILLAGE RECTORY. 3s. 6d.

Happy the man that sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that chequer life.—COWPER.

CONTENTS. Introductory Chapter; The Village.—The Retired Trades man.—The Good Aunt.—The Family at the Hall.—The Village Schoolmaster.—The Village Apothecary.—The Deserted Wife.

SADOC AND MIRIAM. A Jewish Tale of the Time of Our Saviour. 1s. 8d.

THE chief object of the Author has been to exhibit the Evidences of Christianity as they must have appeared to a Jew, in our Saviour's time. In order that this might be clearly done, it was necessary to point out the prevailing prejudices to which they were opposed. The introduction of these into a story seemed

more likely to attract the reader, than if they had been barely exhibited to his view through the medium of an argumentative treatise; while such combination enabled the writer to intermix some portion of Jewish antiquities.—*Introduction.*

LE BOUQUET LITTERAIRE. Recueil de Beautés Religieuses et Morales, de divers Auteurs. Par Feu L. T. VENTOUILLAC. Professeur de Littérature Française au Collège Royal à Londres. 3s. 6d.

THIS little posthumous volume is the production of an individual, whose living energies were consecrated to the important work of Education, and who, early in

life, fell a martyr to his exertions in that cause, at a period when the fairest prospects of present usefulness and of future eminence were opening before him.

- * **MECHANICS APPLIED TO THE ARTS**; including **STATICS** and **HYDROSTATICS**. By the Rev. H. MOSELEY, M.A., Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy, King's College, London. 6s. 6d.

This work contains treatises on the sciences of Statics and Hydrostatics, comprising the whole theory of Equilibrium. It is the first volume of a course of Natural Philosophy, intended for the use of those who have no knowledge of Mathematics, or who have made but little progress in their mathematical reading. Throughout the whole, an

attempt has been made to bring the principles of exact science to bear upon questions of practical application in the arts, and to place the discussion of them within the reach of the more intelligent of that useful class of men who are connected with the manufactures of the country.

- * **POPULAR PHYSIOLOGY**; being a familiar Explanation of the most Interesting Facts connected with the Structure and Functions of Animals, and particularly of Man; adapted for general Readers. By PERCEVAL B. LORD, M.B., M.R.C.S. Of the Bombay Medical Establishment. 7s. 6d.

To trace the finger of God in the works of creation, to consider "the wonders that he doeth amongst the children of men," has ever been a source of the purest and noblest gratification. This volume, taking for its subject the animal body, and more peculiarly that of man, explains the various contrivances by which he is enabled to "live, move, and have his being;" shows him first as consisting of numerous sets of

organs, all performing different offices, yet all conspiring with beautiful harmony for the benefit and preservation of the whole; then views him as an individual, his organism animated by one vital principle, and directed by one mind, situated in the midst of numberless other beings, with whom he is destined to maintain relations, principally by means of his external organs of sense.

- * **THREE WEEKS in PALESTINE and LEBANON**. With many ENGRAVINGS. 3s.

- * **THE HISTORY of MOHAMMEDANISM**, and the principal MOHAMMEDAN SECTS, derived chiefly from Oriental Authorities. By W. C. TAYLOR, B.A., T.C.D. 5s. 6d.

LORD TEIGNMOUTH'S LIFE of SIR WILLIAM JONES; with Selections from his Works, and a **LIFE of LORD TEIGNMOUTH**. By the Rev. SAMUEL CHARLES WILKS, M.A. Two volumes, 10s. 6d.

ROSE-BUDS RESCUED, and presented to my CHILDREN. By the Rev. SAMUEL CHARLES WILKS, M.A. 4s. 6d.

THE BRITISH MONTHS, a POEM, in TWELVE PARTS. By RICHARD MANT, D.D., M.R.I.A., LORD BISHOP OF DOWN and CONNOR. Two volumes, 9s.

SACRED MINSTRELSY; a **COLLECTION** of the **FINEST SACRED MUSIC** by the best Masters, arranged as Solos, Duets, Trios, &c., and Chorusses; and with Accompaniments for the Piano-Forte or Organ. Completed in two handsome folio volumes, price 21s. each; or in Nos. I. to XXIV., 1s. 6d. each.

GERMAN BOOKS.

The GERMAN WORKS of ADOLPHUS BERNAYS,

PR. DR.

GERMAN PROFESSOR IN KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.

GERMAN HISTORICAL ANTHOLOGY. 7s.

It cannot be disputed that the works used by a student in acquiring his first knowledge of a language, should contain matter calculated to enlarge his mind. With this view, I have made this selection from the German Historians, a class of writers that has lately become as numerous as it is distinguished.

A COMPENDIOUS GERMAN GRAMMAR. Second Edit. 5s.

THE great merits of this Grammar are perspicuity combined with conciseness. The rules, although evidently the result of original inquiry, are stated in few words, unencumbered by philosophical disquisitions, but as often as necessary compared with the principles which govern the English Language, and illustrated by striking examples taken from the best German writers.

FAMILIAR GERMAN EXERCISES, adapted to the German Grammar; with Notes; and Specimens of German Handwriting. 6s.

MOST of the examples given in these Exercises are taken from the standard German writers. In the whole of the etymological part they are simple and short, so as to show at the first glance their bearing upon the rules they are intended to illustrate. Those on the Syntax and Construction display, in an easy gradation, the principles which govern the formation of German periods. The book is chiefly intended to teach the writing, but it will be found equally serviceable as a key to the German writers. The Lists and Notes are of the greatest practical utility.

GERMAN EXAMPLES, illustrating the Author's German Grammar, and forming a KEY to the Familiar German Exercises. 3s.

THIS book, as may be seen by the title, may be used as reading lessons, explanatory of the rules of the Grammar; or as a Key by which to correct the Exercises, either when the Student is deprived of the advantages of a Teacher, or when it is wished to employ the hours of instruction to other purposes.

The GERMAN READER, a Selection from the most Popular Writers, with Translations and Notes, for the Use of Beginners. 5s.

GERMAN POETICAL ANTHOLOGY, or Select Pieces from the principal German Poets; with a History of German Poetry, and Explanatory Notes. Second Edition. 8s. 6d.

IN these reading-books, of which the Reader should be used first, nearly all the difficulties which can occur in reading German have been solved. The examples are, at the same time, either amusing or instructive, and so selected as to suit both sexes of every age.]

London: JOHN W. PARKER, PUBLISHER, WEST STRAND.



